A DISCOURSE

Concerning the

Nature and Grounds

OF THE

CERTAINTY

OF

FAITH,

IN

ANSWER

To *J. S.* his *Catholick Letters.*

By EDW. STILLINGFLEET, D.D.
Dean of St. *Pauls.*

LONDON:
Printed for *Henry Mortlock*, at the *Phœnix* in St. *Paul's*
Church-Yard, MDCLXXXVIII.

Dr. Stillingfleet's

ANSWER

TO

I. Sr Catholick Letters.

Imprimatur,

Jan. 5. 1687.

Liber cui Titulus, A Diſcourſe Concerning the Nature and Grounds of the Certainty of Faith, *&c.*

H. Maurice, *R^mo in Chriſto, P. D.* Wilhelmo *Archiep.* Cantuarienſi, *a Sacris.*

THE CONTENTS.

Page

The Title of Catholick Letters *Examin'd* 1

How J. S. *comes to be concerned in this Debate* 3

His Doctrine denied to be Catholick *by the* Sorbon *Doctors and others* 5

His Self-Contradiction about it in seven Particulars 7

The State of the present Controversie about the Certainty of Faith 15

How it is altered by J. S. 25

Of the Certainty of Particular Points of Faith 27

The Grounds of the Certainty of Faith laid down by the General Consent of the School-Divines 31

J. S's *main Argument against our Certainty of Faith Answer'd and Retorted* 34

An

Contents.

Page

An Evident Proof of the Certainty of Faith without Infallibility 37

The Notion of a Rule of Faith Explained 38

The Sense of Tradition may be mistaken as well as Scripture 43

The Instances of it defended 44

The Second Argument, about Fallible Certainty, *Answer'd.* 49

The Third, about our Rule of Faith, being common to all Heresies, Answer'd 50

The Fourth, about making our Private Judgment our Rule, Answer'd 53

The Fifth, about Judgment of Discretion *Consider'd and Answer'd* 54

How far the Scripture is a Rule to our People 55

What Certainty they have as to things necessary to Salvation 61

What Judgment of Discretion allowed by him 62

That it doth not serve only to find an Infallible Authority proved at large 64

His severe Conclusion of his Third Letter *Answer'd* 69

The Answer to the Argument summ'd up 71

The Sixth Argument about the Apostles not using a Written Rule in their Preaching, Answer'd 73

The

Contents.

Page

The Seventh, about Points neceſſary to Salvation, Anſwer'd 74

The Similitude of the Purſe defended 76

Scripture owned to be a Rule of Faith (though not complete) by the Divines of the Church of **Rome** 78

And that all Points ſimply neceſſary are therein contained 81

J. S. *his Conceſſion that all Points are not neceſſary to all Perſons* 83

Some Mens Uncertainty overthrows not the Certainty of Others 85

The Eighth Argument about the Certainty of the Letter of Scripture 86

J. S. *overthrows it, by allowing it to be corrected by the Senſe of the Faithful* 87

The Grounds of our Certainty laid down 89

Of Human and Divine Faith 91

The Laſt Argument, about the Number of Canonical Books, Anſwer'd 92

No Books of the New Teſtament loſt 93

How the Canon was entire in the Firſt Ages 95

Of the Univerſal Conſent of all Chriſtian Churches 97

The Demonſtration for Oral Tradition laid down 100

The

Contents.

Page

The Instance of the Greek Church not Answer'd 101

The Argument it self consider'd 104

A clear and distinct Answer given to it, and its notorious Fallacy laid open 105

How Errors might come into the Church 109

The late Instance of Molinos *produced* 109, 110

Many other Causes of Errors besides Forgetfulness and Malice set down ibid.

The Charge of Pelagianism defended against J.S. 113

Of the Council of Trents *Proceeding on Tradition* 115

The Proof that it did not, referr'd to another Discourse 116

ERRATA.

PAge 16. line 9. for *as Mr. G.* read *as Mr. S.* p. 32. Marg. for 9. 6. *times*, r. 9. for 19. 9. r. 1, 2. p. ibid. Marg. l. 9. for *the 2d.* r. *M.* p. 60. l. 23. r. *and how far, and.* p. 105. l. 15. blot out *not* before *really*, l. 16. add *not* after *are.*

A DISCOURSE Concerning the NATURE & GROUNDS OF THE CERTAINTY OF FAITH, &c.

WHEN I publiſhed my Two Letters to Mr. G. I had *good Reaſon* to expect an Anſwer from him, who began the Controverſie. But it ſeems he had *better Reaſon* to forbear (and it is not hard to gueſs at it) and I am turned over to one, who pretends to write *Catholick Letters* againſt me. I have a great and juſt Reverence for ſome *Catholick Epiſtles*, and be-

lieve them written by an *Infallible Spirit*; but for these *Catholick Letters*, though their whole design be *Infallibility*, yet I cannot find so much as a fair *Probability* in them. But why must these be call'd *Catholick Letters?* Are they written by some *Catholick Bishop*, to give an Account of his Faith, according to the Custom of the Antient Church? Is it, that the Doctrine contained in them is undoubtedly *Catholick?* So far from it, that I shall make it appear, that no one Church of the *Christian World* ever own'd it. But, suppose, it had been the Doctrine of the *Roman Church*, how could this make them *Catholick Letters*, unless so great a *Logician* had first proved, that a Part may assume the *Denomination* of the whole? But then, why not, *Roman Catholick Letters* according to the new Style? There was a Reason for this. *J. S.* hath not forgotten, how hardly he had lately escaped Censure at *Rome*, for the Principles contained in them; and therefore though he hopes they may pass for *Catholick* here, yet he durst not joyn *Roman* to *Catholick* in the Title of his Letters.

But how comes *J. S.* to be concerned in this Controversie with Mr. G.? The Account he gives of it in the beginning of his *First Letter* is very pleasant. He saith, *He accepted a Commission from Mr. G. to hold his Cards, while he is not in Circumstances to play out his Game himself.* I will not examine Mr. G's. *Circumstances*, nor *the Game he plays at*; but methinks, this is no very decent way of expressing the undertaking a Debate about *Matters of Faith and Salvation*. But in Truth, he makes the business of *Infallibility*, as he handles it, to be a Matter of *Sport* and *Diversion*; notwithstanding all his *Grimaces* and *Tragical Expressions* about it. It is hard to be severe upon a Metaphor; but, suppose it be allowed; yet I wonder, of all Men, he

he ſhould pitch upon *J. S. to hold his Cards for him*, who had plaid his own ſo ill, and ſo much to the diſſatisfaction of the leading Men of his own Church. Yet he now appears as brisk and confident, as if he were ſome *New Gameſter*; although he produces his *old ſullied Cards*, (a little wiped) over again; and ſeems to have forgotten the Anſwer to his *Sure Footing*, and the Accompt he ſtill owes to the World for it. I know not, how far it agrees with the Laws of *Eccleſiaſtical Chivalry*, for one, who hath not defended himſelf, to appear a Champion for another, eſpecially in the ſame Cauſe; but there is no great Reaſon to apprehend he ſhould do much for another, who hath done next to nothing for himſelf.

The main Subject of the Debate is, about the *Nature* and *Grounds* of the *Certainty of Faith*; and the Method I think moſt natural and effectual to proceed in, is,

I. To ſhew how unfit *J. S.* of all Men, is to undertake this Cauſe.

II. To ſettle the true State of the Controverſie between us.

III. To examine the Reaſons he produces againſt our Grounds of Certainty.

IV. To lay open the weakneſs of his Arguments, on behalf of the Infallibility of *Oral* and *Practical* Tradition.

I. As to *J. S.* his appearing in this Cauſe again, we are to conſider, that in his *Catholick Letters*, he frequently owns *Faith vindicated*, *Reaſon againſt Raillery*, *and Errour nonpluſt*; and even *Sure Footing* it ſelf. But I ſhall now ſhew, that he diſowned the main Principles in thoſe Books, when he was in great danger

of being Cenſured at *Rome* for them; and therefore is not to be allow'd to produce them again. The Account of this Matter will give great Light into the *ſtate* of the preſent *Controverſie*, and is therefore neceſſary to be premiſed to it.

Out of thoſe Books of *J. S.* a conſiderable Perſon in the Church of *Rome*, ſelected three *Propoſitions* about the *Grounds* of his *Infallible Certainty*, which were theſe;

Faith vindicated, *pag.* 13.

I. *That he who is obliged to profeſs Faith propoſitions true, muſt ſee the Connexion between their Terms, and conſequently, that they cannot be unconnected, or falſe.*

Faith vindicated, *pag.* 41.

II. *If the two Terms be not ſeen to be connected, theſe Propoſitions may, nay ought to be denyed by the Reſpondent, whoſe Office and Right it is to grant nothing but what is evident, leſt he enſnare himſelf.*

Errour Nonpluſt, *pag.* 135.

III. *'Tis requiſite and neceſſary, that the Aſſent of Faith in divers particular Believers be formally Infallible, or that thoſe Perſons be infallibly certain by evident Reaſons, that the Authority or Rule of Faith they rely on, cannot herein deceive them. Elſe great Wits, and acute Reflecters, whoſe piercing Underſtandings require convictive Grounds for their Faith, would remain for ever unſatisfied: nor would the wiſeſt Chriſtians ſincerely and heartily aſſent to, nor with honeſty profeſs the Truth of their Faith, nor could any prove it true, or eſtabliſh rational doubters in it, or convert Men of exact knowledge to it, or convince Hereticks, calling the Truth of it in queſtion. Nor could Governors and leading Perſons with any Conſcience or Credit propoſe and preach the Truth of Faith to the Generality.*

Theſe

These Propositions were tender'd to two Doctors of the *Sorbon*, who declared, *The First could not be explained in a Catholick Sense*; and therefore very unfit for *Catholick Letters*. *For if* (say they) *a Person sees the Connexion between the Terms, it would be Science, and not Faith; it is enough to see them not to be contradictory, or that the Connexion is not repugnant to Reason. Divine Faith is above, not contrary to Reason.* *Hæres. Blakean. P. 37, 38.*

As to the Second, they agreed, *That neither could that be explained in a Catholick Sense, because it is destructive of Faith, and a Proposition ought not, cannot be denied, although the Respondent hath not Evidence of the Terms of which it consists; when he otherwise knows the Church (which Faith* [not Demonstration] *teaches to be Infallible in Matters of Faith) to propose as a Truth revealed by God.*

To the Third, they say, *That it cannot be explained in a Catholick Sense: Because it is sufficient that the Church be believed by Faith to be Infallible, and it is not requisite that the Infallibility of the Church be proved by evident Reason.*

See here the main Design of his *Catholick Letters* declared to be no *Catholick Doctrine*; which is to prove that there must be Infallible Certainty by Conclusive Evidence of the Churches Infallibility. And if this be not *Catholick Doctrine*, I am infallibly certain his Letters are far from being *Catholick* in their Sense.

One of these Doctors writes to the A. B. of *D.* That *the Natural Sense of the Propositions could not be Catholick; and that all Bishops were bound to suppress this Doctrine, lest it did mischief to the Flock of Christ. And that the A. B. of* Paris *would revoke his Licence, if the Author did not retract them, as he hoped he would.* P. 39.

What?

What? Retract the Substance of his *Catholick Letters*! Is this possible? And yet again publish the same Doctrine as *Catholick*! This is indeed very *surprising*. But so it was. For the A. B. of *D.* averrs, *That* J. S.
P. 39. *confessed the Propositions to be Heretical, yea very Heretical*; but he said, *they were not taken in his sense*; which the other said, *was a ridiculous Plea*. He granted, that
P. 40. J. S. might *contradict himself*, but there was no colour for saying *the Propositions were not taken in their true*
P. 42. *sense*. And Mr. S. being requir'd by the A. B. of *Paris* to *Anathematize these Propositions, and to subscribe to the Censure that they could not be explained in a Catho-*
P. 44. *lick Sense*; *he did it*. And yet the sense of them is maintained by him in his *Catholick Letters*. Is not such a Man *fit to hold the Cards for Mr. G.*? who makes the same Doctrine to be *Heretical* and *Catholick*, as his Circumstances require. And in his own Language, *he*
Third Letter, p. 65. *goes backwards and forwards, blows and sups, declares for and against* the same Principles.

This Doctrine of *J. S.* was complained of at *Rome*, and a *Congregation of Cardinals* was appointed to Exa-
Append. ad Hæres. Blakloan. mine it, and they sent their Instructions about it to the *Popes Nuncio* at *Paris*, where *J. S.* then was. And therein they took notice, that in his *Vindication* sent to them, *he detested that Doctrine as Heretical*, viz. *that the Evidence of the Connexion of Predicate and Subject, and the Evidence of the Rule of Faith by which the Believer may be infallibly certain he cannot be deceived, is necessary in order to Faith.* I desire the Reader to mark this *Declaration* which *J. S.* sent to *Rome*, and to compare it with the Doctrine of his *Catholick Letters*: But of that hereafter.

But it is worth our while to shew with what a *double Face J. S.* appeared in his *Vindication* and *Complaint*, sent to *Rome*, and in his *Books* which he published here.

And

And by that, the Reader may judge of the *Catholick* Sincerity of the Writer of these Letters.

I. About the *Faith* he designs to demonstrate.

Faith Vindicated, *Preface.*

I declare then, that my chief End in this Treatise, is to settle Christian Faith, or to demonstrate, that it must be truly or absolutely certain, and that my applying it now and then to my Opposers, is only a Secondary Intention, and meerly Occasional.

Querimonia *advers.* Lominum. *p.* 49.

He saith, *He speaks not of Faith in itself, but as it is controverted among us.*

The same he affirms p. 145, 146. *that he meddles not with Faith, but with respect to his Adversaries; or as it is disputed between* Catholicks *and those he calls* Hereticks, *p.* 148.

If it were his design *to settle Christian Faith, and to make it truely and absolutely certain, and only secondarily applying it to his Opposers; how is it possible* that at the same time, *he should not meddle with Faith in itself, but meerly with respect to his Opposers?* Is not this a brave Undertaker, to make *Faith infallibly certain,* who so evidently contradicts himself as to his own design? But it seems, *to us* he must pretend to make Faith certain in itself; but *at Rome,* he meant no more by it, but only to perplex and confound us. As though his Demonstrations were only intended for a sort of *Metaphysical Traps* to catch Hereticks with. But we are glad to see by his own Confession, that Faith in itself is not made *absolutely Certain* by them.

II. About the *Objects* of *Faith*, and the *Evidence* of them.

Reaſon againſt Raillery, *pag.* 55.

The ſtrongeſt and wiſeſt Souls are unapt to aſſent but upon Evidence: Hence, unleſs ſuch Men ſee Proofs abſolutely concluding thoſe Points true, they are unapt to be drawn to yield to them, and embrace them as certain Truths—— Nothing can rationally ſubdue the Faculty of ſuſpending, in ſuch Men at leaſt, but True Evidence had from the Object working this clear ſight in them, either by itſelf, or by Effects or Cauſes neceſſarily connected with it. Other Evidences I know none.

Faith Vindicated, *p.* 12, 13.

The Truth of Propoſitions of Faith conſiſts in the Connexion of thoſe Notions which make the Subject and Predicate. Whoever therefore ſees not the Connexion between thoſe Notions in the Principle of Faith; ſees not

In his Declaration ſent to *Rome*, p. 11, 13. he not only expreſſed his Aſſent to theſe Propoſitions, but *That the contrary to them were Falſe, Deſtructive of Faith, and Heretical*, viz.

I. *That the Objects of Faith are not to be evident or demonſtrable by Natural Reaſons in order to believing them.*

II. *That in order to the believing ſuch Objects of Faith, conveyed down to us, either by Scripture or Tradition, it is not neceſſary to know evidently the Connexion of Predicate and Subject, but it is ſuffi-*

the Truth of any of those Propositions.---- It follows, that he who is obliged to profess Faith-Propositions true, must see the Connexion between those Terms.

sufficient if they be proposed by the Catholick Church.

Now let any Man try how he can reconcile these things; (1) *Nothing can subdue rationally the Faculty of suspending but true Evidence had from the Object*; and yet *it is destructive to Faith, and Heretical to say, that the Objects of Faith are demonstrable by natural Reasons, in order to believing them.* Is not *true Evidence from the Object a natural Reason in order to believing?* (2) *He that sees not the Connexion between Predicate and Subject, sees not the Truth of Faith-propositions; and he who is obliged to profess them, must see it*; and yet, *in order to believing Objects of Faith, it is not necessary to see it, nay it is Heretical to assert it.*

III. About Infallible Assent.

Reason against Raillery, p. 113.

'Tis most evident therefore and demonstrable, that there is no Certainty, but where there is Infallibility; and that we can never be said to be truly certain of any thing, till, all Circumstances consider'd, we see ourselves out of possibility of being deceived hic & nunc *in that very thing.*

In his Declaration, *p.* 11, 13. he owns this Proposition to be *True*, and the contrary to be *Heretical*, viz.

That it is not necessary, in order to believing the Objects of Faith, that he that believes, should know evidently his Assent to be Supernatural and Infallible.

But *if there can be no Certainty of Faith, till we see ourselves out of possibility of being deceived,* I should think it very hard to say it was *Heretical to assert it was necessary for him that believes to know his Assent to be Infallible.* For what difference is there between *knowing we cannot be deceived in our Assent,* and that *it is Infallible?* But here he will hope to escape, by joyning *Supernatural* to *Infallible*; and so he over-reached the Cardinals by putting those together; for his is nothing but a *pure Natural Infallibility.*

IV. About the *Mediums* of Faith used by him.

Sure footing, *p.* 172.

He rejects *Extrinsecal Mediums as insufficient, and requires Intrinsecal.*

Faith Vindicated, *Preface, at the end.*

He owns his *Discourses to be built on Intrinsecal Mediums.*

Errour Nonplust, *p.* 169.

He requires *clear Evidence from the Object, to ground a firm Assent.*

Page. 170, 171.

He makes it necessary to *true Certainty, that it be taken from the Thing or Object. And true Certainty* (he saith) *is built on the Things being as it is, and nothing can ever be truly known to be otherwise than it is.*

In his *Subscription* to the *Instructions* from *Rome,* p. 12. he denies that he spake of *Intrinsecal Requisites to Faith; but only of Extrinsecal.* And this he goes about to prove against his own plain Words, in his *Declaration,* Sect. 3. pag. 34, *&c.*

How

How *can Intrinſecal Mediums*, and *Evidence from the Object*, be only *Extrinſecal Pre-requiſites?*

V. About *Human* and *Divine Faith.*

Faith Vindicated, *p.* 73. *Divine Faith ought to have a far greater degree of Firmneſs in it, than any Human Faith whatſoever: Wherefore ſince Human Faith can riſe to that degree of ſtability—— Divine Faith being Supernatural, ought to be more firmly grounded; and conſequently more highly impoſſible to be falſe.*

Errour Nonpluſt, *p.* 143. He ſpeaks expreſly of *Divine Faith.*

In his Vindication, *p.* 97. He ſaith, *It is Evident that he ſpake of Faith, formally as Human, and not as formally Divine.*

What *Evidence* can there be like a Man's plain Words? Is not that *Divine Faith* which he goes about to demonſtrate the *Infallible Certainty* of? It ſeems we are all this while to ſeek for the Certainty of Faith *formally Divine*; and all this mighty Noiſe about the Neceſſity of *Infallibility*, reaches no farther than a *Faith formally Human.* And yet *J. S.* affirms that he undertook to prove *the impoſſibility of Falſhood in Divine and Supernatural Faith.* And ſo it ſeems *Divine and Supernatural Faith* muſt derive its *Infallible Certainty* from a meer *Natural Infallibility.* Or if it be but Human Faith he means, then he falls ſhort of what he

promiſed, which was to ſhew the *Infallible Certainty* of *Divine Faith*. And thus the *Trap-Maker* is catch'd himſelf.

VI. About *particular Points of Faith.*

Errour Nonpluſt, *p.* 161.

I thought he had meant Certainty of the Points of his Faith. What we are then in Reaſon to expect from Dr. St. *is, that he would bring us Grounds for the Certainty of his Faith, as to determinate Points,* viz. *Chriſt's Godhead, a Trinity,* &c.

Reaſon *againſt* Raillery, *p.* 167.

Seeing then Chriſtians are bound to profeſs their Faith true, as to thoſe Points of a Trinity, for Example, or Incarnation, &c. *it follows, that it muſt be affirm'd and held that a Trinity or Incarnation abſolutely is, and conſequently, that it is impoſſible not to be.*

Declaration, p. 50.

He peremptorily aſſerts (and challenges his Adverſaries to ſhew the contrary) *that he produced not one Argument to prove any Points of Doctrine to be Divine, or Supernatural; but only, that ſuch a Doctrine was delivered by Chriſt or his Apoſtles.* And this he frequently inſiſts upon, and is the main of his Defence.

But why then doth he urge us to produce our Grounds of *Certainty* as to *particular Points*, if himſelf doth not? If he pretends no more than to prove them in general, why may not we be allowed to do the ſame? He that calls upon others to do it, in ſuch an inſulting manner, is preſumed to do it himſelf, and if he doth not, he only *banters* and abuſes his Reader. And after all

all this mighty pretence to *Demonſtration and Infallibility*, the whole Diſpute comes to this, whether Men may attain to greater Certainty of *Chriſt's Doctrine* by *Oral and Practical* Traditions than we can do by *Scripture*, *Reaſon* and *Tradition?* But this is againſt his words, where he ſaith, *Seeing then Chriſtians are bound to profeſs their Faith true, as to thoſe Points of a Trinity, for Example, or Incarnation*, &c. *it follows, that it muſt be affirm'd and held that a Trinity or Incarnation abſolutely is, and conſequently, that it is impoſſible not to be.*

VII. About *Moral Certainty.*

His whole Book called *Faith vindicated* was written againſt it. And in the Preface to it, *p.* 3. he oppoſes *abſolute Certainty to Moral*; and he ſaith, *thoſe who have it not, have no true Faith.*

Page 17.

True Faith by reaſon of its immoveable Grounds, can bear an aſſerting the abſolute Impoſſibility of its falſhood. And without this, he makes Faith abſurd, preternatural and irrational.

Page 34.

Moral Certainty is in reality uncertainty; and the higheſt degree of Moral Certainty is the loweſt

When I read in *Lominus*, pag. 43. that *J.S.* in his *Vindication* pleaded, that he required no more than *Moral Evidence for the Aſſent and Profeſſion of Faith*, I could hardly believe him; and therefore I was earneſt to ſee what he would ſay in *Anſwer* to this; but even there, *pag.* 23. he owns it, and ſaith expreſly, *That Moral Evidence is abſolutely*

degree of Uncertainty, truly so called.

The same he asserts, *pag.* 36, 86, 93.

Error Nonpluſt. *pag.* 195.

Fallible Certainty deſtroys all Efficacy, all Defence, and even Eſſence of Faith.

abſolutely ſufficient to Faith: But withal he ſaith, *There is more than Moral Evidence in Tradition.*

Let now any indifferent Perſon compare thoſe Aſſertions together: If *Moral Certainty be Uncertainty, and deſtroy the Eſſence of Faith,* how can it *be abſolutely ſufficient to Faith?* But beſides *the Contradiction*; he hath by this one Aſſertion overthrown the whole Deſign of his *Catholick Letters*. For, if *true Faith* may be had without *Infallible Certainty*, what need any ſuch contending about it? For the Ground of the Diſpute is about ſuch *Faith* as is *neceſſary to Salvation*; and if *true Faith*, as *J. S.* grants, which is neceſſary to Salvation, may be had without their pretended Infallibility; there is no Colour left for preſſing Perſons of our Communion to forſake our Church, becauſe we cannot have *Infallible Certainty* of *Faith*, when themſelves grant that we may be ſaved without it. And what *Sincerity* is to be expected from ſuch a Man, who makes ſuch out-cries upon us, for want of *Infallible Certainty* for Faith, when himſelf Confeſſes, that *Moral Certainty is ſufficient to Faith?* what ever becomes of *Moral Certainty*, I love *Moral Honeſty*; and I cannot ſee how it is conſiſtent with it, to make ſuch mighty pretences to the Neceſſity of *Infallible Certainty* for Faith, even in his *Catholick Letters* (which ſeems to be the chief Deſign of them,) when him-

himſelf had declared to the Cardinals at *Rome*, that leſs than that is ſufficient for true Faith. But the ſecret of it is, he knows well enough, there is no ſuch Neceſſity for *Infallible Certainty*; and when it will bring him off, he can own it; but among us *Hereticks*, they muſt *bluſter* and make a mighty noiſe about it; becauſe it ſtartles weak and injudicious People; and they find nothing ſo apt to terrifie and confound them like *Infallibility*; which like a *Flaſh of Lightning* doth not help them to ſee better, but ſtrikes them down with Horror and Aſtoniſhment.

And here I might fairly ſtop and ſend the Reader to *J. S.* for an effectual Anſwer to his own *Letters*; or at leaſt to ſhew; how very unfit he was after ſuch going forward, and backwards in this matter, to undertake this Cauſe.

2. But leſt I ſhould ſeem to decline any thing which may ſeem material, I ſhall now proceed to *ſtate* the *Controverſie*, as it lies between Mr. *S.* and me. For, what concerns another Perſon, I ſhall leave it to himſelf, as not ſtanding in need of any Aſſiſtance from me.

The *Occaſion* of the Conference was ſet down by Mr. *M.* to have been, *That Mr. G. affirmed in ſome Companies, that no Proteſtant could ſhew any Ground of Abſolute Certainty for their Faith; and that Mr. S. had promiſed him, that if I were not able to manifeſt the contrary, he would forſake our Communion.*

So that Mr. G. was the *Aggreſſor* by laying this charge upon us, *That we could ſhew no Ground of Abſolute Certainty for our Faith.* And therefore when in the Conference I aſſigned the Scripture for the Ground and Rule of our Faith, and univerſal Tradition for the Proof of the Books of Scripture, I had Reaſon in my Expoſtulatory Letter to Mr. G., to deſire of him to ſhew, "That we have no abſolute Certainty of the

"Rule:

"Rule of our Faith, *viz.* the Scripture, although we "have a larger and firmer Tradition for it, than "you can have for the Points in difference between "us.

This plainly relates to the *Conference, wherein Scripture was own'd to be our Rule, and Universal Tradition, the Evidence on which we receive the Books.* And to any Man of Sense, this is not *Shifting and Tricking off the Proof to Mr.* G. as Mr. G. often calls it; but it is a plain and evident Proof of our *Certainty* upon their own Grounds. For, if *Tradition* be such a Ground of *Absolute Certainty*, as they assert, and we have *a larger and firmer Tradition for Scripture, than they can produce for the Points of Faith in difference between us*; then it is evident we must have, upon their own Principles, a *Ground* of *Absolute Certainty* for our *Faith*; which was the main Point of the Conference.

First Letter, pag. 4. 5, 6.

If he will Answer the Argument, he must either deny *that we have Universal Tradition for the Books of Scripture*, or that *Universal Tradition* is a *Ground* for the *Absolute Certainty* of *Faith?* Either of these ways he had said something to the purpose; but he found this way of Reasoning too hot for him; and therefore, he calls it *Shifting and Tricking off the Proof to Mr.* G. and so falls into a *Tragical Declamation* against *my not proving, and making a Secret of the Ground of our Certainty*; as if a Man intended to make a *Secret* of a Horse he had lost, when he published his *Marks* in the *Gazett.* Here is the *Ground* of our *Certainty* laid down in that very place, where he saith, *I shift off the Proof to Mr.* G. but alas for him! He cannot see any thing like a *Proof*, unless it be serv'd up, with all its due formalities of *Major, Minor* and *Conclusion.* Must I be forced to tell him, as the Painters did by ill Pictures, *This is a Horse, and this*

this a Wolf? This is an *Argument*, and this an *Anſwer?* It is a hard Caſe if a Man cannot underſtand Reaſon, unleſs like *Scaliger*'s Jeſts againſt *Cardan*, there be ſomething in the Margin to direct where they are to be found. All Men of Senſe underſtand the force of an *Argument*, though it be not dreſſed up after the way of the *Schools*; and to tye Men up to thoſe Methods of *Reaſoning* in our Age in Books of Controverſie, is like *Trammelling* a Horſe, when he is to go a Journey; it might do well to teach him to pace, but it would be ridiculous, when he is upon Service.

Upon this he runs out into a very Eloquent piece of Trifling, making ſad Moans and Complaints with many Exaggerations, and great variety of Phraſes, *As if I offer'd no kind of Certainty to Mens Souls, but only that I bid thoſe that doubt prove the contrary*; and ſo brings notable parallels *of* Peters *having twenty pounds in his Purſe, becauſe* Paul *cannot prove he hath it not*; *or his having the more Title to an Eſtate, becauſe an Adverſary may have the ill luck to be Nonſuited.* I know not how Mr. G. will take theſe things; for they do not ſeem much to his Advantage. If I were as he, I would never truſt him *to play my Cards* more; for what means this inſinuation of *Nonſuiting*, &c? But Mr. *S.* is plainly miſtaken, for the force of it doth not depend upon his bare *Nonſuiting*; but upon the *Goodneſs* of the *Deeds*, and the *Strength* of the *Evidence*, which himſelf relied upon, and appear much ſtronger for us than for him.

It is not *Pauls not proving*, but *Peters producing the twenty pounds*, and laying it before him, which is the *Argument* to prove he hath it. Suppoſe he did not produce it *in Specie*, but ſhewed good *Security* for it, ſuch as *Paul* could not deny, had he not reaſon to be-

lieve he was owner of it? There being ſo little colour in the Reaſoning Part, I paſs over the Declamatory, as fitter for the School at the *Savoy*, than a Writer of Controverſies.

But here comes in, among his Flowers, a very notable Point of Divinity. *Truth is therefore Truth, becauſe it is built on Intrinſecal Grounds which prove it to be ſuch; and not on private Mens Abilities, or their ſaying this or that.* This latter is undoubtedly true, and is univerſally believed, ſince the School of *Pythagoras* was broken up: *Wherefore till thoſe Grounds be produced, it cannot be with Reaſon held Truth.* This is great; and becoming the *Scientifical J. S.* But will he hold to this? Will he own it to the *Cardinals* of the *Inquiſition?* I find a certain Gentleman with the very ſame Letters, *J. S.* writing two whole *Sections*, wherein he denies *that ever he medled with Intrinſic Mediums, or that it was poſſible that he ſhould.* But *P. T.* was then living, and followed him cloſe at *Rome*; now that fright is over, out come *Intrinſic Grounds* again; *and no Man can hold any thing as Truth, till thoſe Grounds be produced.* Suppoſe a Man aſſents to the Doctrine of Faith, as *True* and *Divine* on meerly *Extrinſecal Grounds*, or *Motives of Credibility*; hath this Man *true Faith* or not? Is he bound to hold and profeſs it to be true, though he doth not ſee the *Intrinſecal Grounds which prove Truth to be Truth?* Doth that Man ſin, who *profeſſes to believe a thing to be true*, though he doth not ſee the *Intrinſic Grounds* for it? What kind of ſin is it, *Mortal*, or *Venial?* How far may a Man ſafely deny that which *he cannot with Reaſon hold to be true?* How many thouſand Martyrs Lives, might this Doctrine have ſaved in the

Declaratio *J. S.* circa Doctrinam in ſuis libris contentam; exhibita Sacræ Congregationi Eccleſ. & R. D D. Cardinalium---- General. Inquiſitorum. Duaci. 1677.

the Primitive Times? How might the poor Innocent Christians have pleaded for themselves; "That they "could see no *Intrinsic Grounds*, which made *Truth to be* "*Truth*; and they understood from a deep *Divine*, "that *till those Grounds be produced, it cannot with* "*Reason be held Truth*; and if it cannot with Reason be "held, it may surely in our very hard Circumstances, "with Reason, be denied, or at least concealed and "dissembled. There seems to be more danger in pro- "fessing the Faith without it; than in not owning it, "*being not able to produce Intrinsic Grounds for it.* And "these are far above our reach and capacity; and if it "cannot with Reason be held Truth without it, it "seems very unreasonable to require us to dye for it.

What saith *J. S.* to the Case of the *Jews*, who heard our *Saviours Doctrine, and saw his Miracles*, did they sin in their Infidelity or not? It will be very hard for him prove, *that they saw Intrinsic Grounds* for what they were required to believe; and yet our Saviour charges them with very great Sin in their Infidelity. *John* 15. 22. I hope Mr. *S.* will not answer me, about these things, as he did some in the Conference at *Paris*, with, *Tace, Tace, interrumpis & confundis me.* This very Instance of the *Jews* was then brought against him by Dr. G. and he said, *That only those Jews sinned, who had clear Evidence that Christs Miracles were true and Supernatural.* But *A. B.* of *D.* then urged, *That if they had such Evidence, they could not have inward Unbelief, nor call in Question the Truth or Divinity of Christ and his Miracles.* To which *J. S.* replied, *Tace, nolo tibi Respondere.* I hope he is better provided of an Answer now, and that he will shew, wherein the sin of the *Jews* lay, who did not profess Christ's Doctrine to be true, because *they could not pro-*

Haref. Blokloan. pag. 315, 316, 317. Page 318.

duce any Intrinsic Grounds for the Truth of it.

But to return to our first Controversie, *About the*
Page 6. *Certainty of Faith to be proved by us.* He tells me, *that I know well enough, that to prove Protestants have no Absolute Certainty of their Faith is no hard Task even for a weak Man; I know,* he saith, *that any Man may find it confessed to his hands by Protestants*; and in the Margin he cites, *Dr.* Tillotsons *Rule of Faith*, pag. 117, 118. I wonder at Mr. *S*'s. Courage, that he dares mention that Book, to which he hath so many years been indebted for an Answer, and what he hath offer'd towards it in *Faith Vindicated, and Reason against Raillery*, he hath again retracted as to the main *Principles* of them, for fear of a *Censure* at *Rome*; and which he advanced out of opposition to those of that Book which he quotes here. So that *J. S.* by disowning those *Principles* of his, hath justified Dr. *T.* and hath overthrown the *Absolute Certainty* of his own *Faith*. For I have already proved from his own words, *That he owns Moral Evidence to be absolutely sufficient for Faith*; and yet this is the very thing from whence he proves *that Protestants have confessed that they have no Absolute Certainty of their Faith.*

But if this Matter were to be decided *by the Confession of Parties*, what thinks he of those of the Church of *Rome*, who have charged his Doctrine about *Infallible Certainty*, with downright *Heresie and Impiety, and that it leads to Atheism and Infidelity, and overthrows the Christian Faith?* This we are told is *the sense of all the Learned and Orthodox Men of your Church.* Let the Reader judge what *J. S.* hath gotten by the *Confession* of *Parties.*

Hæres. Blackloan. p. 33. 153. &c. 323.

Hæc nova propositio fidem Christianam destruit impellitque ad Scepticismum & Atheismum. *Hæres. Blaklo.* p. 66.

Mecum omnes viri Docti & Orthodoxi sentiunt, per tua principia vastum ad Atheismum & Heresin hiatum aperiri. *Hæres. Blackloan*, p. 200.

I hope now we ſhall come to the *State* of the *Queſtion*; for he charges me with perverting it: *The Firſt Queſtion* (he ſaith) *at the Conference, was, Whether Proteſtants are abſolutely Certain, that they hold now the ſame Tenets in Faith and all that our Saviour taught to his Apoſtles.* And my Anſwer, he ſaith, was, *They are.*

By his favour, my Anſwer was not in thoſe words, "but that we are abſolutely certain that we now hold "all the ſame Doctrine that was taught by Chriſt and "his Apoſtles. And for a certain Reaſon, I deſire my own Words may expreſs my Mind; for I do not find *Oral Tradition Infallible*; and where Words are varied, the Senſe may be ſo too.

But he obſerves, *that I trick it off again*, as he calls it, (I ſuppoſe it is Gameſters Language,) *from the Point of Abſolute Certainty of Faith, to Abſolute Certainty of the Rule of Faith*, viz. *the Scripture; but our Saviour and Proteſtants believe more than that the Book ſo called, is Scripture. Is Certainty of this* more, *and Certainty of this Book, all one? Here is then an enquiry after one thing, plainly turned off to another.* It ſeems Mr. G. is quite gone for a *Gameſter*; for he diſcerned *no Tricking* in this matter, nor can I. It is very true, we do believe *More*, than that the Book ſo called is *Scripture*; for we believe *All* the Matters of Faith contained in that Book. And what then? If by his *More*, he means Articles of Faith not contained in Scripture; then I tell him plainly, we believe *no More*. And therefore when Mr. G. put his next Queſtion, as he thought very pertinently, *By what Certain Rule do you hold it?* My Anſwer was, *By the Divine Revelation contained in the Writings of the New Teſtament:* Whereby I excluded his *More*, if it be not contained in Scripture. But if by *More*, he means our Aſſent to the Points of Faith contained in Scripture,

I ſhall give a full Anſwer to it afterwards. Then he asked, *By what Certain Rule do you know that the New Teſtament, which we now have, does contain all the Divine Revelations of Chriſt and his Apoſtles?* And if he puts ſuch Queſtions concerning the Rule, What *Tricking* was it in me, to give a direct Anſwer to them? How did I *turn off the Enquiry from one thing to another*, when I only Anſwered the Queſtions he propoſed? This is not *playing Mr. G's Cards*, but condemning him for *playing unskilfully*; and deſiring to begin a *new Game*; for Mr. G. had a *bad hand*, and managed it very ill.

But what would *J. S.* have done? *The thing to be made manifeſt by the Conference, was, the Abſolute Certainty of Proteſtant Faith.* And ſo it was; for *Proteſtant Faith* is to believe *all that is contained in Scripture, and no more.* Mr. G. *did indeed ask ſome Queſtions about your Certainty of your Rule*; and I gave him direct Anſwers. Where is the *Tricking* in all this? *But I wiſely cut off the Courſe of the Queſtions before they had queſtion'd away the Certainty of Faith.* So far otherwiſe, that I let them alone, till they plainly run away from the buſineſs of *Certainty* to another Queſtion; and then Mr. T. *cut them off*, by declaring himſelf ſatisfied; and asking *How they could prove the Church of* Rome *to be Infallible*?

But now we are to ſee how much better the *Cards* might have been plaid. And now, look ye Gentlemen, the Man of Skill begins the Game. *After the Certainty of Scripture from Tradition was admitted, there was no Refuſing to admit that Tradition cauſes Certainty, and makes Faith as certain as Scripture.* See the difference of theſe two *Gameſters* at *Tradition!* But what if I ſhould yield him, that I will not refuſe to give my Aſſent to any Point of Faith, which comes down to us from the

Apoſtles

Apoſtles Times with *as large and as firm a Tradition as the Scripture*? *Then* (ſaith he) *it would have proved ſomething difficult to ſatisfie even a willing Man, that the Faith is certain which is oppoſed to a Faith come down by Tradition. Something difficult!* Nay very much ſo, without doubt. But this is fairly to ſuppoſe, that you have as *Univerſal a Tradition* for your *Tridentine Faith*, as we have for the *Scripture*; but this I utterly deny; and I hope in another *Treatiſe* to ſhew, I have not done it without Reaſon. Let the Matter of Tradition itſelf, as a *Rule of Faith*, be one of theſe Points. If there were a *Conſtant Univerſal Tradition* in the *Chriſtian Church* from the *Apoſtolical Times*, that there were *Matters of Faith* neceſſary to Salvation not contained in Scripture, I grant that it would be difficult, to prove it to be a Matter of Faith that Scripture alone is our Rule of Faith. But that is the mighty Advantage of our Cauſe, that we have both *Scripture* and *Tradition* for us; and that no *Catholick Tradition* can be produced againſt us, in any one Point of the *Additional Creed* of *Pius* IV. which is the Deſign I have undertaken, of which I ſhall ſuddenly publiſh the *Firſt Part*; and if God gives me Life and Health, I hope to go through the Reſt. Well; *but in the mean time, Abſolute Certainty of Scripture was not the Point of the Conference.* Can *J. S.* tell better than the Managers? His meaning is, it ought not to have been. *Nor is it the Point of Concern.* This is ſtrange. Not *the Point of Concern* to thoſe that own it to be *the Word of God, and the only Rule of Faith!* It is of *Infinite Concern* to us; if it be not to you, I pity you for it.

Beſides that, it is agreed on all hands, Men are ſaved by Believing and Practiſing what Chriſt taught, not barely by believing Scripture is Scripture. This is no New Speculation:

culation; But what follows from it? *Therefore we ought to believe Christ's Doctrine contained in Scripture, and obey his Commands*; and do I give the leaſt Intimation againſt this? But, the Queſtion was about our *Rule of Faith*, and that I ſtill think is the *Scripture*; and whatever is contained therein, is to be believed on that Account. *But Salvation is the thing that imports us in theſe Diſputes, and 'twere well if nothing elſe were minded by Diſputers.* And ſo think I too. I deſire no more to end our Controverſies, than to make *Salvation* our End, and the *Scripture* our *Rule*. But how can *Salvation be the thing that imports us in theſe Diſputes*, if *Men cannot with Reaſon hold any thing true, unleſs they can produce the Intrinſecal Grounds which prove it to be ſo?* Doth Mr. *S.* in earneſt think, that none are ſaved but *Metaphyſical Speculators*, that *perch upon the ſpecifick Nature of Things*, and dig into the *Intrinſecal Grounds of Truth*? If this be his Opinion, *How few can be ſaved!* But if *Salvation* be the End, the *Means* muſt be ſuitable to the Capacity of Mankind; and I do not think, *the Intrinſecal Grounds of Truth* are ſo.

But after all, he ſaith, *that I ſtifle any further talk of the Certainty of Proteſtent Faith.* How can that be, when I own no *Proteſtant Faith* but what is contained in Scripture, or may be deduced from it; according to the Sixth Article of our Church. I am not conſcious to myſelf of *any Art in the matter*, which he charges me with; and he ſaith, *I avoid what cannot be performed.* What is that? *To make out that Proteſtants are abſolutely certain that they now hold all the ſame Doctrine that was taught by Chriſt and his Apoſtles.* If all that Doctrine be contained in Scripture, and they hold the Scripture by Grounds of *Abſolute Certainty*, then Proteſtants

teſtants muſt be certain *that they hold all the ſame Doctrine that was taught by Chriſt and his Apoſtles.*

Afterwards Mr. *S.* ſtarts ſomething that comes nearer to the buſineſs; which is, *that Certainty of Faith and Certainty of Scripture, are two things: For thoſe who have as much Certainty of Scripture as we, may have not only an Uncertain but a Wrong Faith; and therefore I am concerned to ſhew, not only that Proteſtants have Certainty of their Rule, but of the Faith which they pretend to have from that Rule:* That which I am now upon, is to ſettle the *true State* of the Controverſie about the *Certainty of Faith.* In the *Conference*, my firſt Anſwer was, that, *We are abſolutely Certain that we now hold all the ſame Doctrine, that was taught by Chriſt and his Apoſtles.* And when the Queſtion was asked, *By what Certain Rule do we hold it?* I anſwer'd, *By the Divine Revelation contained in the Writings of the New Teſtament.* So that the *Certainty of Scripture* was that which I was obliged to anſwer to. Now comes *J. S.* and he finds fault with Mr. G's management; becauſe he asked Queſtions about the *Certainty of the Rule*; whereas he ought to have gone another Way to work. So that now Mr. G. is given up, and a New Controverſie is begun upon other *Grounds*; and the Words which I uſed with Reſpect to the *Rule*, are applied to particular *Doctrines.* He ſaith, *The Certainty of Scripture was not the Point for which the Conference was.* How comes he to know better than Mr. G. unleſs he directed the Point, and Mr. G. miſtook and loſt it in the Management? *But I am now bound to manifeſt, that Proteſtants have Abſolute Certainty, not only of the Scripture, as the Rule, but of the Faith they have from that Rule, or elſe to own that I cannot.* It ſeems Mr. G's *good Nature* betray'd him, when he asked Queſtions about *the Rule*

of Faith; and ſo the main Point was loſt. Yet methinks it was not meer good Nature in Mr. G. For, when we are asked, about the Grounds and Certainty of our Faith, how is it poſſible we ſhould anſwer more pertinently, than to aſſign the *Rule* of our *Faith*? And we declare it to be the Scripture, by which we judge what we are to believe, and what not. And therefore if any ask us of *the Matter of our Faith*, we muſt anſwer, It is whatever God hath revealed in the *Scripture* which is our *Rule*. If they ask us, *How we come to know theſe Books to be written by ſuch Perſons*, we ſay, It is *by the Univerſal Tradition of the Chriſtian Churches*. If they ask us, *Why we believe the Doctrine contained in thoſe Books*, then our Anſwer is, *From the Divine Teſtimonies, which make us certain that it came from God*. And thus we anſwer both to that which is called, the *Material* and *Formal Object of Faith*; and if we are *abſolutely Certain* of theſe, we muſt be ſo of our *Faith*. If we ask a *Jew* about the *Certainty* of his *Faith*, he ſaith, he is Certain of it, becauſe all his Faith is contained in the *Books* of *Moſes*, and he is well aſſured they were written by Divine Inſpiration. If we ask a *Mahometan*, of his *Faith*, his Anſwer is, That his *Faith* is contained in the *Alcoran*; and by proving that, he proves the *Certainty of his Faith*; and if that be diſproved, the *Certainty* of it is overthrown. Thoſe who reſolve their Faith into a Written Rule, muſt go thither, when Queſtions are asked them about the *Certainty* of their *Faith*. For, if I believe every thing in it, and nothing but what is in it, there lies my *Faith*, and the *Certainty* of it depends upon the *Certainty* of my *Rule*. *But I muſt ſhew the Certainty of the Faith of Proteſtants, as it is pretended to be taken from the Rule*. Not certainly, when the Queſtion is asked about the *entire Object* of

our

our *Faith*, or when we are to ſhew how *we hold all the ſame Doctrine that was taught by Chriſt and his Apoſtles*; for the word *All* makes it neceſſary for us to Aſſign our *Rule* wherein that *All* is contained. If he ask us of the Certainty of any particular Point of our Faith, then we are to make it out, that this is contained in our *Rule*; and our *Certainty* is according to the *Evidence* we are able to produce for it.

For the Caſe is not the ſame, as to *particular Points* of *Faith*, with that of the *General Grounds* of the *Certainty* of *Faith*. A *Jew* firmly believes all that is contained in the Books of *Moſes*, and with the higheſt Degree of *Certainty*; but whether the *Reſurrection* can be proved certainly from thoſe *Books*, is a particular *Point*; and he may have *Abſolute Certainty* of all contained in thoſe Books, though he may not have it, as to ſuch a Particular Point. And when we come to *Particular Points*, their Caſe is not only different from the *General Rule* of *Faith*, but ſuch *Points* are very different both among themſelves, and as to the *Certainty* of them.

For, (1) There are ſome *Points* of *Faith*, which were *neceſſary to be Revealed*, *becauſe they were neceſſary to be Believed*, *in order to our Salvation by Jeſus Chriſt*. For as Mr. *S.* ſaith, *Salvation is the thing of greateſt Importance*; and therefore on Suppoſition, that it is to be by *Jeſus Chriſt*, the Nature of the thing requires, that we have a firm and eſtabliſhed Faith in him. And of theſe *Points of Faith*, the Church hath given a Summary in the *Creeds* which were propoſed to thoſe who were to be Baptized; and not only St. *Auguſtin*, but *Aquinas* ſaith, *theſe were taken out of Scripture*; and the *Certainty* of them to us, doth depend not upon the *Authority* of the *Church* propoſing them; but the 2. 2. q. 1. ad 1.

Evidence of *Scripture* for them, which is very much confirmed to us by the *Concurrent Teſtimony* of the Chriſtian Church in all Ages, from the Apoſtles times, *i. e.* as to the *main Articles*; for that there was a great variety, as to others, is evident to any one who will compare the *Ancient Creeds*, as I have lately ſhewed. And theſe main Articles are thoſe which *Aquinas* calls the *prima Credibilia*; which are therefore revealed, becauſe neceſſary to be believed by all that hope for Salvation by *Jeſus Chriſt*.

II. There are other *Points* of *Faith*, which are *only neceſſary to be believed, becauſe they are ſo clearly revealed*; As that *Cajaphas* was *High Prieſt* when Chriſt ſuffer'd; that there were *two Malefactors who ſuffer'd with him*; that he was buried in *Joſeph of Arimathea's Sepulchre*; no Man who believes the *Scripture* can doubt of theſe things; and yet we do not make theſe *Points* of *Faith* in themſelves neceſſary, becauſe they have no immediate Reference to *Salvation*, which might have been as effectually carried on, if there had been another High Prieſt, or Chriſt had lain in another *Sepulchre*. But in theſe Points there is an *abſolute Certainty* from the unqueſtionable *Evidence* of their being contained in Scripture.

III. There are *doctrinal points* not neceſſary to Salvation, about which ſome may attain to a greater Degree of *Certainty* than others. And the ſame Meaſure is not required of all; Becauſe Mens Capacities are not equal, if they do uſe equal Diligence; and all are not obliged to the ſame Degrees of Diligence that ſome are. As to the Points *neceſſary to Salvation*, God is not wanting by his Grace to make them known to Men of honeſt and ſincere Minds. And this is no peculiar Doctrine of mine, as *J. S.* would inſinuate, but it hath been the

the conſtant Doctrine of their moſt Learned and Judicious *School-Divines*; as is evident from what they ſpeak of the *Donum Intellectus*, and the *Lumen Fidei*, which ſecure Men from Errour in what concerns their Salvation. If he hath therefore ſuch an Inveterate Spleen againſt this Doctrine, let him attaque the greateſt Divines of the Church of *Rome*, who have in terms aſſerted the ſame, which I have done. And I would fain ſee *J. S.* demonſtrating againſt *Aquinas*, and all his followers, *That there is no ſuch Security from Errour in Points neceſſary to Salvation, where ever God beſtows true Grace.* As to *Points not neceſſary to Salvation*, I do not affirm, there is any ſuch *Ground* of *Abſolute Certainty*, as to *particular Perſons*, who are only concerned as to their own *Salvation*. And that was the Reaſon of my Anſwer to the fourth Queſtion. "The Univerſal Teſtimony of the Chriſti-"an Church, concerning the Book of Scripture, and "the Doctrine contained therein is a ſufficient Ground "to make us certain of all Matters neceſſary to our "Salvation. But of this more afterwards. It is ſufficient here to obſerve, that even in the Church of *Rome*, there are *Points* of *Doctrine*, which are not *de Fide*, and conſequently the *Certainty* of *Faith* is not required to them. And then it is moſt unreaſonable to require the *Abſolute Certainty* of *Faith* in thoſe things which we deny to be *Points* of *Faith*. It is, as if we ſhould ask them what *Abſolute Certainty* of *Faith* they

Sed circa ea quæ ſunt de Neceſſitate Salutis, ſufficienter inſtruuntur à Spiritu Sancto. 2. 2. 9. 8. *a.* 4. *ad* 1.

Donum intellectus nunquam ſe ſubtrahit ſanctis circa ea quæ ſunt neceſſaria ad ſalutem, ſed circa alia interdum ſe ſubtrahit. *ib. ad.* 3.

A. 3. dicendum quod Lumen Fidei facit videre ea quæ creduntur--- ita per habitum Fidei inclinatur mens hominis ad aſſentiendum his quæ conveniunt certæ Fidei & non aliis. 2. 2. 9. 1. *a.* 4. *ad* 3.

Per lumen Fidei divinitus infuſum homini homo aſſentit his quæ ſunt Fidei, non autem contrariis; & ideo nihil periculi vel damnationis ineſt his qui ſunt in Chriſto Jeſu, ab ipſo illuminati per fidem. 2. 2. 9. 2. *a.* 3. *ad* 2.

they have, as to the *Immaculate Conception* and *Assumption* of the B. *Virgin*, or the *Popes Infallibility*, they would tell us, these are no *Points* of *Faith* with them, and therefore it is unreasonable to ask after the *Absolute Certainty of Faith*, where there is no *Faith* pretended. The same we say, in the like Case, It is very absurd to demand of us the *Absolute Certainty* of our *Faith* in such things, wherein we never pretend to a *Certainty* of *Faith*; but of common Sense and Reason proceeding according to the *Rule* of *Scripture*. As, if Men impose false and absurd Doctrines upon us, as *Transubstantiation*, &c. we insist upon the *Common Right* of *Mankind*, not to be required to believe *Contradictions*; and the *Right of Christians*, not to believe, what hath neither *Scripture*, nor *Reason*, nor *Tradition* for it. And these are the *Grounds* on which we reject the *Additional Creed* of *Pius* the Fourth. We make them no *Points* of *Faith* at all; and if others do make them so, we desire to be excused, because it is as certain to us they are not so, as we can be of *Negatives*: And farther than this we go not in such *Points*; and if this be what he means by *Protestant Faith*, he hath my Answer.

IV. The *General Reason* of the *Certainty* of *Faith* in Particular Persons is not from *Conclusive Evidence* as to the *Points* of *Faith*, but from some higher Cause. And this Mr. *S.* ought to know hath been the constant *Doctrine* of the *Schools* ever since *Divinity* hath been brought into them. I except only one *Franciscus de Marchia*, who required conclusive Evidence to the *Certainty* of Faith, but he is disputed against by *Gregorius Ariminensis*; and he saith, *His Doctrine was condemned by the Faculty of* Paris; *and*

Greg. Ariminens. *D.* 1. *A.* 4. *Q.* 1.

Grego-

Gregory de Valentia, ſpeaks of him with great Contempt for holding ſo abſurd a Doctrine.

Greg. de Valentia. *Tom.* 3. *Diſp.* 1. *Q.* 1. *Part.* 4.

The Certainty of Faith is declared by the Antient *School-men* to be *above Opinion, and below Science*: by which they underſtood, *the Intrinſic Grounds on which Truth is built*; which Mr. *S.* makes neceſſary to the Profeſſion of it.

Hugo de Sancto Victore, ſaith, *That the higheſt Certainty of Faith is owing to a Pious and pure Diſpoſition of the Mind, and an immediate Divine Influence.*

Hugo de Sancto Victore. Sum. ſent. *l.* 1. *c.* 1. De Sacram. *l.* 1. *p.* 11. *c.* 2. 4. Rich. de Sancto Victor. Declar. *Part.* 1. *p.* 373.

Petrus Pictavienſis, That it lies not in Evidence, but Adherence.

Petr. Pictavienſ. Sentent. *Part.* 3. *c.* 21.

Guliel. Pariſienſis, proves Concluſive Evidence repugnant to Faith, in a long Diſcourſe.

Gul. Pariſienſ. de Fide. *c.* 1.

Gul. Antiſſiodorenſis, thinks *rational Evidence good to ſupport and defend the Faith, and to prepare men for it*; *But that the Certainty of it lies not in Speculation, but in an Adherence of the Mind to the Prime Verity.*

Gul. Antiſſiodor Sum. in Præf. & *l.* 3. *Tit.* 2.

Alex. Alenſis, ſaith likewiſe, *its Certainty doth not lie in Speculation, but in inward Affection and Adherence*; *there is*, he ſaith, *an inferiour ſort of Acquiſite Faith which relies on Reaſons and Teſtimonies*; *but this*, he ſaith, *is meerly Natural and Preparatory to Divine Faith.*

Alex. Alenſ. *Part.* 1. *Q.* 2. *M.* 3. *A.* 4. *Part.* 3. *Q.* 68. *M.* 2. *A.* 2.

Bonaventure ſaith, *the Certainty of Adherence is beyond that of Speculation, becauſe a Martyr may have doubts, and yet die for his Faith.*

Bonavent. *l.* 3. *D.* 23. *Q.* 4.

Thomas

Aquin. 1. 9. 46. a 2. in C.
19. 9. 32. A. 1. in. E.
2. 2. 9. 2. a. 1. ad 1.
9. 1. a. 4. ad 3.
9. 2. a. 3.
9. 5. a. 4. C.

Thomas Aquinas thinks, *those that go about to bring Demonstrations for Faith, expose it to the Scorn and Reproach of Infidels*; and he resolves *the inward Certainty of Faith into Divine Illumination*; when the Objection was put, *That Matters of Faith could not be resolved into first Principles.* Which Mr. *S.* hath so long and so vainly pretended to.

Henr. Gandav. Sum. Art. 7. Q. 2. N. 6, 7, 8.
Art. 9. Q. 3. N. 13. 13. Q. 1, N. 4, 5.

Henricus Gandavensis saith, *There is a Certainty of Adherence in the habit of Faith; and that the Evidence of Credibility falls much short of that of Science; and he makes Scripture the Rule, whereby we are to judge of the Doctrine of the present Church, and of all Ages succeeding the Apostles.*

Scot. in Sentent. L. 3. Q. 23. N. 14, 15.

Scotus distinguisheth *between Acquisite and Human Faith, and Divine or Infused Faith*; but he denies any *Infallibility* to belong to the former.

Durand. Prolog. Q. 1. N. 43, 46. L. 3. Dist. 24. Q. 3. N. 8, 9.

Durandus denies *Faith to be consistent with Conclusive Evidence*; and *that the Motives of Credibility affords such Evidence, because that necessitates Assent.* And it is observable, that he resolves *Faith* not into the *Testimony* of the *present*, but of the *Apostolical Church.*

I need produce no more, to shew what a Stranger Mr. *S.* is to the *Doctrine* of his own *Church*; or else what an obstinate Opposer he is of it. But this is sufficient to shew what *Grounds* of the *Certainty of Faith* are allowed by the Chief Divines of the Church of *Rome*,

Rome, and how very different they are from thoſe of the *Catholick Letters*. To ſumm up briefly therefore the *State* of this *Controverſie* about the *Certainty* of our *Faith*;

I. I aſſert, That we are *Abſolutely Certain* of the *Formal Object* of our *Faith*, viz. that *whatever God reveals, is True, and to be profeſſed by us, though we do not ſee the Intrinſick Grounds of it.*

II. We are *Abſolutely Certain* of the *Infallible Rule of our Faith*; and that *All* the neceſſary Points of Faith, in order to the Salvation of Mankind, are therein contained.

III. The *General Certainty* of *Divine Faith* in true Believers, according to their own Divines, doth not depend upon *Concluſive Evidence*, or *Intrinſick Grounds*, but an inward Perception cauſed by Divine Grace.

IV. *Particular Points* of *Faith* are more or leſs *Certain*, according to the *Evidence* of their Deduction from *Scripture* as the *Rule* of *Faith*.

V. Where any *Propoſitions* are impoſed as *Points* of *Faith*, which others deny, thoſe who impoſe, are bound to prove the *Certainty* of them as ſuch, and not thoſe who reject them.

And this is our Caſe as to the Points in Difference between us and thoſe of the Church of *Rome*: We do not make the *Negatives* any *Points of our Faith*, any further than as the *Scripture is our Rule*, and we cannot be bound conſequently to receive any thing as a *Point of Faith*, but what is contained in it, or deduced from it. But the Church of *Rome* requiring us to receive them as *Points* of *Faith*, is bound to prove the *Certainty* of them as ſuch.

Having thus endeavoured to ſet this Controverſie about the *Certainty of Faith* in its true Light, I now proceed to conſider what Mr. *S.* doth object againſt it. And I ſhall conceal nothing that looks like an Argu-

ment. His Raillery I deſpiſe, and his Impertinencies I ſhall paſs over.

I. That which looks moſt like an Argument, is, what he hath ſet out by way of *Propoſitions* in his *Firſt Letter.*

1. *God hath left us ſome way to know what ſurely Chriſt and his Apoſtles taught.*

2. *Therefore this way muſt be ſuch, that they who take it, ſhall arrive by it at the End it was intended for*; i. e. *know ſurely what Chriſt and his Apoſtles taught.*

3. *Scriptures Letter interpretable by Private Judgments, is not that way*; *for we experience Presbyterians and Socinians (for Example) both take that way, yet differ in ſuch high Fundamentals, as the Trinity and the Godhead of Chriſt.*

4. *Therefore Scriptures Letter interpretable by Private Judgments, is not the way left by God to know ſurely what Chriſt and his Apoſtles taught, or ſurely to arrive at Right Faith.*

5. *Therefore they who take only that way, cannot by it arrive ſurely at right Faith, ſince 'tis impoſſible to arrive at the End, without the means or way that leads to it.*

Upon ſetting down this, Mr. *S* being ſenſible he had plaid his *beſt Cards*, cannot help a little expreſſing the Satisfaction he had in the *Goodneſs* of his *Game*. *I do not* (ſaith he) *expect any Anſwer to this Diſcourſe, as ſhort as it is, and as plain, and as nearly as it touches your Copy-hold.* Alas for me, that am fallen into the hands of ſuch a Gameſter! But I am reſolved to diſappoint him, and to give him a *clear* and *full Anſwer* to this ſhew of Reaſoning. And that ſhall be, by making it appear,

I. That it proceeds upon Falſe Suppoſitions.

II. That it deſtroys any Rule of Faith, even his own admired *Oral* and *Practical Tradition.*

I. That

I. That it proceeds upon Falſe Suppoſitions. As.

1. That no *Certainty* can be attained where there is no *Infallibility*. For if Men may arrive at *Certainty* where there is a general *Poſſibility* of *Deception*, all this ſeeming *Demonſtration* comes to nothing. And yet this is a thing all Mankind are agreed in, who allow any ſuch thing as *Certainty*; and the contrary Opinion was (which Mr. *S.* little thinks) the very Foundation of *Scepticiſm*; viz. *That there could be no Certainty, unleſs Men could find out ſuch an Infallible Mark of Truth, which could not agree to what was Falſe*; as he might have learned in *Cicero*'s *Lucullus*, without ſending him to *Pyrrho*'s Scholars. And till *Zeno* and his Diſciples pretended to find out this, *Scepticiſm* gained little Ground; but when they yielded to that Principle, That no *Certainty* was to be had without it, then a mighty Advantage was given them, which they improved accordingly. But the more Judicious Philoſophers were forced to quit the *Stoicks Infallible Mark*, and to proceed upon ſuch Evidence of Perception, and Senſe, and Ratiocination, as might in things not Self-evident form an Aſſent which excludes all reaſonable Doubt of the contrary. But ſtill thoſe who pretended to *Infallibility*, were the moſt deceived. As *Epicurus* thought there could be no *Certainty* in *Senſe*, unleſs it were made *Infallible*; and from hence he ran into that groſs Abſurdity, that the Sun was really no bigger than he ſeemed to be to our Senſes. For, he went juſt upon Mr. *S.* his Principles, *If there be a poſſibility of Deception, there can be no True Certainty*; and to make good this *Hypotheſis*, the Sun muſt be no bigger than a Bonfire. But the Wiſer Philoſophers took in the Aſſiſtance of *Reaſon*, which, though not Infallible, might give ſuch Evidence, as afforded *Certainty*, where it fell ſhort of *Demonſtration*. As in *Phyſical* and *Moral* things. I grant, that

ſome of thoſe who talked moſt and beſt of *Demonſtration*, fell wonderfully ſhort of it, when they came to apply *Notions* to *Things*; and the *Demonſtrations* they made were to little or no purpoſe, in the promoting of Knowledge, as, that *Man is a Rational Creature*, &c. But their *Phyſical Speculations* are very far from it; yet this doth not hinder but that a *Certainty* is attainable as to the Nature of Things. And in *Morals*, they knew and confeſſed there could be no *Demonſtration* in them; yet they profeſſed a *true Certainty* they had as to the *Nature* of *Happineſs*, and the real *Differences* of *Vertue* and *Vice*: They owned ſome *Moral Principles* to be *Abſolutely Certain*, as *that Good is to be choſen, and Evil to be avoided*, &c. but in particular Caſes, they made uſe of the beſt Reaſon they had, to prove ſome things Good, and others Evil. And although they could not proceed with equal *Certainty* in all *Vertues* and *Vices*; yet in ſome they had clear *Evidence*, and in others they made uſe of the beſt means to give Satisfaction to themſelves and others.

Thus it is in *Matters* of *Faith*, there are ſome things *Abſolutely Certain*, as, that *God cannot deceive us*; that *the Scripture is our Rule of Faith*; but then, whether ſuch Points be contained in that Rule and be of *Divine Revelation*, is not Self-evident; andtherefore theſe muſt be deduced by all the beſt Methods of *Reaſoning* from a *written Rule*; and when Perſons have examined the Scripture with all the Care and Diligence, which one who would arrive at *Certainty* thinks himſelf obliged to, then I do affirm, that ſuch a Man may attain to a true *Certainty and Satisfaction* of Mind about it. And that *true Certainty* is attainable without *Infallibility*, I ſhall prove by an undeniable Inſtance (if an Inſtance willl be allowed; and I hope I ſhall make it appear as reaſonable for me to produce *Inſtances* as himſelf,) and

that

that is, concerning a *Point of Faith* of the greateſt Importance, *viz. That Jeſus Chriſt was the true Meſſias foretold by the Prophets.* The Proof of this depended on the *Interpretation* of *Scripture*; and there could be no Infallible Interpreter relied upon in this Caſe. As to *Chriſt himſelf*, although he really was ſo, yet we ſuppoſe the Queſtion to be about him, whether he were an *Infallible Teacher* or not; and therefore we muſt not ſuppoſe the thing to be proved. As to the *Publick Interpretation*, which Mr. *S.* makes his *Infallible Rule*, if that were to be relied upon, then a *Jew* was bound not to believe Chriſt to be the *true Meſſias*, becauſe the *Publick Interpretation* was againſt him; and the *Traditional Senſe* of the *Prophecies* was againſt him, being for a Temporal Prince; I now demand of Mr. *S.* whether the *Jews* were capable of *Certainty* in this Point or not? If not, then the *Jews* were excuſed in their Infidelity: If they were, then true Certainty may be had without an Infallible Guide, although the *Publick Interpretation* and *Tradition* be againſt it. And if it may be had in ſo difficult a Caſe, which depended on the *Senſe* of *obſcure Prophecies*; much more certainly under the clear Revelation of the Goſpel; wherein all *Neceſſary Points* are laid down with ſo much clearneſs, that the Fault muſt be more in Mens *Wills* than their *Underſtandings*, if they do not apprehend them.

2. The Second falſe Suppoſition is, *That a Rule of Faith* muſt be a *Mechanical Rule*, and not a *Rational*; *i. e.* It muſt be like a *Carpenters* Rule, that hath all its Dimenſions fixed, and ready to be applied to Material things; but in matters of Underſtanding no ſuch Rule is to be expected. The *Philoſophers* who diſputed ſo much about *Certainty*, would have laughed at any man who had applied a *Material Rule* to Intellectual things; yet this is Mr. *S*'s great Example: *I take my Ruler,* ſaith *Second Letter, p. 25.*

ſaith he, *and draw a Line by it; does the ſtreightneſs or crookedneſs of this Line depend upon my Underſtanding?* By no means. But is there any ſuch *Intellectual Rule* as this? There have been great Diſputes in the World, among Men of Wit and Subtilty, about the *Certainty* of Human Knowledg; Whether any Infallible *Criterion* could be found to diſcern Truth and Falſhood? But they never imagined any ſuch thing as an *Intellectual Ruler to draw Lines by*; but that there were certain Differences of Truth and Falſhood, which men might find out, but not without Diligence and Application of their Minds to it. And notwithſtanding the Characters of Truth and Falſhood were in themſelves Certain, yet it was very poſſible for Men to miſtake about them; not only for want of Judgment, but of Diligence and Impartiality: So we ſay here as to a *Rule* of *Faith*; we do not ſuppoſe it to be a *Material Rule*; *i. e.* If a Man take the *Letter of Scripture*, and apply it to any Opinions, he muſt preſently know whether they be true or falſe; but it is a *Rational* and *Intellectual Rule*, which is *abſolutely Certain* in it ſelf; and whatever agrees to it is *True*, and whatever doth not is falſe: But ſtill there may be miſtakes in the *Underſtanding* and *Applying* it; and therefore *Care*, and *Diligence*, and *Impartiality*, are required; by which ſome may attain to that *Certainty*, which others miſs off. As in the *Points* he mentions of, *the Presbyterians and Socinians differing about ſuch high Fundamentals, as the Trinity and Godhead of Chriſt.*

1. Why *Presbyterians* and *Socinians*, I beſeech him? There is a notable Inſinuation in this, as though we of the *Church* of *England* were *Socinians* in thoſe Points; and none but *Papiſts* and *Presbyterians* were Orthodox in them. But this is an Inſinuation which hath as much Folly as Malice in it; ſince our ſolemn and expreſs Declarations

rations, are to the contrary: And he may as well call us *Papiſts* as *Socinians*, ſince our Writings are as plainly againſt one, as the other. What our Senſe as to theſe Matters is, he may find in the *Dialogues* of the *Doctrine of the Trinity and Tranſubſtantiation compared*; not long ſince Publiſhed by a *Divine* of the *Church of England*. But to paſs this over, 2. Suppoſe the *Difference* between us and the *Socinians*, What then? *Both take the ſame way of Scriptures Letter Interpretable by private Judgments, and yet differ in theſe Fundamental Points.* And what follows? That the *Scripture* is no Certain Rule? By no means. But that the *Socinians* may err, and certainly do in miſinterpreting this Rule. *But how can it be a certain Rule, if men that uſe it may err in uſing it?* How can Reaſon be certain in any thing, if Men following Reaſon may miſtake? How can *Arithmetick* be a *certain way of computation*, if Men following the *Rules* of *Arithmetick*, may miſtake in caſting up a *ſum?* Doth any Man queſtion the *Certainty* of the *Rule*, for Mens blundering in their Accompts? yet this is his way of Reaſoning. And I will put it juſt with his Propoſitions.

I. *Arithmetick preſcribes a Certain way by Addition and Subſtraction for us to find out any Sum.*

II. *Therefore it muſt be ſuch that they who take it, ſhall arrive by it, at the exact Sum.*

III. *But two Men who have made uſe of the ſame way, differ at leaſt a hundred in caſting up the Sum.*

IV. *Therefore Arithmetick doth not preſcribe a certain way to attain at a Certain Sum.*

V. *Therefore they who take only that way, cannot by it arrive at the Certain Sum.*

Is

Is not this clear and evident Demonſtration? But thoſe who conſider a little better than Mr. *S.* hath done, will diſtinguiſh between the *rule* and the *application* of it. The *Rule* of *Arithmetick* may be nevertheleſs *Certain*, although thoſe who want Skill, or Care and Diligence, may miſtake in caſting up a particular Accompt.

The ſame we ſay here, *Scripture* is a *Certain Rule* in all *Fundamental Points*, to ſuch as have Capacity and Uſe, due Care and Diligence in finding them. But we do not deny, but Men through Prejudice, Weakneſs, want of Attention, Authority of Falſe Teachers, Impatience of throughly examining things, and not uſing proper Helps may run into groſs Errors; ſuch as thoſe about the *Trinity* and *Incarnation*; but ſtill the *Rule* is *Certain* to thoſe who uſe it aright, although it be very poſſible for Men through their own Faults to miſtake about it.

And this is no way diſagreeing to the infinite Wiſdom of God, who deals with us as with Rational Creatures; and hath put Faculties into us, that we might uſe them in order to the *Certainty* of our *Faith*. And ſuch *Moral Qualifications* are required in the *New Teſtament*, in order to the Diſcerning the Doctrine of it, as *Humility of Mind*, *Purity of Heart*, *Prayer to God*, *Sincere Endeavour to do the Will of God*; that it would be very repugnant to the Deſign of it, to ſuppoſe that *the Letter of Scripture* alone would give a Man immediate and certain Directions in all Matters of Doctrine being applied to it. Therefore an eaſie Anſwer is to be given to Mr. *S*'s. great Difficulty, *viz. How the Senſe drawn from the Letter can any more fail to be true, than the Line drawn by the Rule to be ſtraight. For*, we ſay, *that the Senſe truly drawn from the Scripture can never fail*

fail to be true; but we do not ſay, that every Man muſt draw the *True Senſe* from the *Scripture*; for, although the *Scripture* be an *Infallible Rule*, yet unleſs every Man that makes uſe of it be *Infallible*, he may miſtake in the *Application* of it. And this to me is ſo clear, that to make an *Infallible Rule* in his Senſe, he muſt make every Perſon that uſes it *Infallible*, or elſe he may err in the *Application* of it; *But the Right Way*, ſaith Mr. *S. will certainly bring a Man to his Journeys End, and the way muſt needs be a wrong way if it do it not.* The *Right way* will certainly bring them to their Journeys end, if they continue in it; but here we muſt conſider what is meant by the *Journeys End.* If by it be underſtood their *Salvation*, then we ſay, that thoſe who do their utmoſt endeavours to keep in that way, ſhall not fail of their *Journeys End.* But if by it be underſtood *the Certain Truth or Falſhood of every Opinion tried by the Scripture*, then I anſwer, that although the Senſe of Scripture be infallibly true; yet it was not deſigned as an *Infallible Way* for us to know the *Truth* and *Falſhood* of all particular *Opinions* by. For, as Mr. *S.* well obſerves, *Salvation is that which chiefly imports us*; and it was for that End the Doctrine of Chriſt is made known to us, and it is an *Infallible Way* to it, if Men continue therein; but for judging the *Truth* or *Falſhood* of *Opinions* without reſpect to *Salvation* as the *End*, it was not intended as an *Infallible Way* to every one that makes uſe of it; and therefore it is eaſie for Men to miſtake in judging by it of things it was not deſign'd for. As if a Man deſigned to obſerve all the *old Roman Cities and Stations* here, and were told the *old Roman Way* would be a *Certain Way* to lead him to them, with the help of the *Roman Itinerary*, if that Man objects, that this will not do, for he cannot find out all the

Second Letter, *pag.* 6.

Modern Towns and *Villages* by this Means, is it not a juſt and reaſonable Anſwer to ſay, that is a moſt *Certain way*, which leads a Man to that which it was deſign'd for; and the *Roman way* was only intended for *Roman Foundations*, but it is very unreaſonable to find fault with it, becauſe it doth not lead you to all Modern Towns and Villages. So ſay I here; the *Scripture* was deſigned by Divine Wiſdom to make us *Wiſe to Salvation*, and thither it will infallibly lead us, if we keep to it; but if beſides this we would know by it ſuch things as are not neceſſary to Salvation, we blame it for that, which was not in the *Original Intention and Deſign* of it. For, when we make uſe of it to be our *Rule* of Judgment, meerly as to Truth and Falſhood of things not neceſſary to Salvation; it is not becauſe it was deſigned for that End; but becauſe it is of *Divine Revelation*, and ſo is the ſureſt Standard of *Divine Truth*; and we are ſure there is no other Rule for us to judge beſides. From whence we may and ought to reject any *Points* of *Faith* impoſed upon us, which are neither contained in Scripture, nor can be proved from it. And ſo it is our poſitive *Rule of Faith*, as to all *Neceſſary Articles*; and our *Negative Rule* as to all *pretended Points of Faith*, which are not proved from thence.

II. I anſwer, that this Method of Mr. *S.* will overthrow the *Poſſibility* of any *Rule of Faith*; becauſe none can be aſſigned, which it is not poſſible for Men to miſapprehend, and to miſtake about it. Let us at preſent ſuppoſe Mr. *S.* to ſubſtitute his *Rule of Faith* inſtead of *Scripture*, viz. *Oral and Practical Tradition*. Why may not Men miſtake the *Senſe* of *Tradition*, as well as the *Senſe* of *Scripture*? Is *Tradition* more *Infallible* in it ſelf? Is it deliver'd by Perſons more *Infallible*?

fallible? Doth it make thoſe to whom it is delivered *Infallible?* Why then, may not thoſe who deliver it, and thoſe who receive it, both be miſtaken about it?

This I had mention'd in my *ſecond Letter*, that it was very poſſible to miſtake the *Senſe and Meaning of Tradition*; and I inſtanced in that of *Chriſt's being the Son of God*; where the Traditionary Words may be kept and yet an *Heretical Senſe* may be contained under them. Mr. *S.* anſwers, *That the Senſe of the Words and all the reſt of Chriſt's Doctrine is convey'd down by Tradition.* This is bravely ſaid, if it could be made out; and would preſently put an End to all Diſputes. For if all the Doctrine of Chriſt be derived down to us in ſuch a manner, that we cannot miſtake the *Senſe* of it, we muſt be all agreed, whether we will or not. For, how can we diſagree, if we cannot miſtake the *Senſe* of *Tradition? Not while we hold to Tradition.* Then it ſeems it is poſſible not to hold to *Tradition*; and if ſo, we have found a terrible flaw in *Human Nature*, that will let in Errors in abundance, *viz.* that it may groſly err about the Rule of Faith; yea, ſo far as to Renounce it. But how is this poſſible, if the *Senſe of Tradition be infallibly convey'd?* For is not *Traditions being the Rule of Faith* any part of it? We muſt in Reaſon ſuppoſe this: And if we do ſo, how can Perſons Renounce its being the *Rule*, while they cannot but believe its being the Rule? If Men may miſtake about *Traditions* being the *Rule of Faith*; why may we not ſuppoſe, they may as well miſtake about any *Points* convey'd by it? For the greateſt Security lying in the *Rule*, there muſt be more Care taken about that, than about the Points convey'd by it.

Second Letter to Mr. *G.* pag. 7.

Third Catholick Letter, pag. 6.

But let us ſee how he proves that Men cannot miſtake the *Senſe* of *Tradition* in *Particular Points*: The

force of what he ſaith, is, *That Men were always Men, and Chriſtians were always Chriſtians*; and Mr. *S.* is always Mr. *S.* pretending *Demonſtration*, when there is nothing like it. If Men were always Men, they were always apt to be deceived; and unleſs Chriſtians by being ſuch are *Infallible*, they are liable to Miſtakes. *But the higheſt means to convey the Senſe of Words are to be found in Tradition.* I am quite of another Opinion; I think it the moſt uncertain way in the World; and the Corruption of the firſt Ages of the World are an Evident Proof of it; when there were all poſſible Advantages of *Tradition*, and yet the Principles of *Natural Religion* were ſtrangely corrupted, although they were plain, eaſie, few, of the higheſt Importance, and Men lived ſo long to inculcate them into the Minds of their Children. If therefore, notwithſtanding *Tradition*, the World might then degenerate into *Polytheiſm* and *Idolatry*; what abſurdity is it to ſuppoſe, that notwithſtanding *Tradition*, the Chriſtian Doctrine might be corrupted likewiſe?

But Mr. *S.* alledges not only *Words* but *Actions, to determine the Senſe of them*; *as, that Chriſt is the Son of God*; *by Praying to him, and giving Divine Reverence to Chriſt without ſtinting them, or making them ſcruple, leſt they give too much, or commit Idolatry by giving that to a Creature, which is due only to God. And does not this Practice, beyond all poſſibility of Miſtake, inſinuate into them, that he is equally to be adored with God the Father, or Co-equal to him, and ſo not a Creature, but Very God of Very God?*

I Anſwer,

I. Would not the very ſame Reaſoning have made the coming in of *Idolatry* impoſſible? For, that there was but *one True God*, was evident from all Acts of *Worſhip*,

Worſhip, being given only to Him, as the proper Object of it: How then could Men ſo foully miſtake, as to give proper Divine Worſhip to any Creature, there being an infinite Diſtance between God and his Creatures, which every Child could not but know by a conſtant Tradition from *Adam*.

II. How was it poſſible that *External Acts* of *Worſhip* ſhould ſo infallibly prove *Chriſt to be true God*, if all External Acts of Worſhip be of an *Equivocal Nature*, and receive their Determination from the inward Senſe of the Mind? Did not the *Arians* uſe the ſame *External Acts* of *Worſhip* with others, with reſpect to Chriſt? Where did they ever ſeparate from the *Chriſtian Aſſemblies*, on the account of the Worſhip given to Chriſt? If not, how was it poſſible from thence to prove Chriſt not to be a *Creature*? So that this is very far from putting the Point of the *Divinity* of *Chriſt* beyond the *poſſibility* of *Miſtake*. Eſpecially, when *Solemn Invocation*, which is one of the moſt natural Parts of *Divine Worſhip*, came to be allowed to meer Creatures. All the difference that can be aſſigned then, muſt be from Mens *Words* and *Profeſſions*, and not from their *External Actions*.

III. The ſame *Divine Reverence* was given to *Chriſt* in the *Apoſtolical Times*, and the utmoſt Care uſed to inſtruct People in the True Doctrine of Chriſt; and yet then we find that Perſons did Err in the Senſe of that Propoſition, That *Chriſt is the Son of God*. For, even then, the *Ebionites* and *Cerinthians* underſtood it, not in Reſpect of *Nature*, but *Adoption*; and ſo did the *Artemonites* and *Samoſatenians* afterwards. And how can that be proved impoſſible to be done, which we ſhew was actually done? Men did notoriouſly miſtake the *Senſe* of *Chriſt's being the Son of God*, when it was received

ceived by *Tradition*; and yet Mr. *S.* pretends it cannot be miſtaken, if it be ſo received.

Third Letter, p. 14. Mr. *S.* ſtill urges, That *Faith hath Senſe in it; and it is inconſiſtent with the Nature of Mankind, not to hold ſome Senſe or other, and with the Nature of Chriſtians, not to inſtruct their Children in that Senſe.* And I think *Words written* have as much *Senſe* in them as *Words ſpoken*, and leſs liable to Miſtakes; there being no ſuch mixtures of the Infirmities of Men in a *Written Rule*, as in *Oral Tradition*. But *Inſtances* are unlucky things to be brought againſt *Demonſtrations*, and ſuch is that of the *Cerinthians* and *Artemonites*, who pleaded *Tradition* for their *Senſe*; and yet they were Men, and pretended to deliver the *true Doctrine* of *Chriſt* to their Diſciples.

I alledged another Inſtance, how the Senſe of *Tradition* might be miſtaken; and that was about a *Real Preſence* in the *Euchariſt*, which might be underſtood in very different Senſes. No, ſaith Mr. *S. That cannot be; for, Faith works on our devout Affections, which muſt either oblige us to pay an infinite Veneration to a Creature, if Chriſt's real Body (and conſequently God) be not there, or if Chriſt be not God, which is the greateſt deviation from true Religion that is poſſible; or elſe to be highly irreverent, and to want the moſt efficacious Motive that can be imagined to excite and elevate our Devotions, if he be there, or Chriſt be indeed God.* Truly Mr. *S.*'s way of Writing is the moſt effectual means I know to make me Queſtion whether *written Words be a good way to convey a Certain Senſe* to our Minds. For, I cannot underſtand, how *Faiths working on our devout Affections, ſhould oblige us, either to pay an infinite Veneration to a Creature, or elſe to be highly Irreverent.* For, ſuppoſing I believe *Chriſt's Body* not to be *really* in the *Euchariſt*, but

but yet that *Christ himself is God*, I think my ſelf bound to ſhew the utmoſt Reverence to *Chriſt as God*, even in the *Act* of *Receiving the Euchariſt*: And I am of Opinion, that the juſt Apprehenſion of the Divine Majeſty, is as apt to *excite and elevate our Devotion*, as the believing the *Body of Chriſt* to be there really preſent. But it is obſervable, what Mr. *S.* here grants, that if *Chriſt's Body* be not there, they are guilty of *paying an Infinite Veneration to a Creature, which is the greateſt deviation from true Religion that is poſſible.* And upon my Word then they had need have better Aſſurance, than what he offers, to prove *Chriſt's real Body* to be there. For, if as great Reverence may be paid to *Chriſt in Heaven*, as if he were *in the Elements*, I cannot ſee how the Poſture of *Adoration* can any ways determin the *Senſe* of *Tradition* in this Matter.

And thus Mr. *S.* hath left the *Senſe* of *Tradition* as *uncertain*, as he pretends that of *Scripture* to be; and if his Argument will hold againſt the One being the *Rule* of *Faith*, it will do as great a Kindneſs for the Other alſo. Thus I have fully anſwered his main Argument, againſt Scriptures being a Rule of Faith, which he hath been ſo free with me, as to tell me *I cannot Anſwer*; and he and I muſt now leave it to the Reader's Judgment. *First Letter*, p. 32.

The ſumm of it is,

I. We diſtinguiſh *Neceſſary Points* of *Faith*, from *Matters* of *Speculation.*

II. We diſtinguiſh *Certainty* of *Faith* in order to *Salvation*, and *Certainty* of *Opinion* in *Matters* of *Controverſie.*

III. We diſtinguiſh the *Certainty* of the *Rule*, from the *Certainty* of the *Application* of that *Rule.*

And

And then my Answer lies in these things;

I. That the *Scripture* is a certain *Rule of Faith* as to all *Points necessary to Salvation*, to all such as make use of it as such, and do not through their own fault make a wrong *Application* thereof.

II. That the *Scripture* was not designed for a *Certain Rule* as to *Unnecessary Opinions*; and therefore Mens not arriving at a *Certainty* in them, doth not hinder its being a *Rule of Faith*.

III. That *Scripture* being our *Rule of Faith*, we are bound to reject all pretended *Articles* of *Faith*, which cannot with *Certainty* be proved from the *Sense of Scripture*. And so the Proof of *Certainty* lies upon those who affirm such *Articles* of *Faith*, and not upon us who deny them.

This Argument is Mr. *S*'s *Goliah*, and now it is no wonder if his lesser *Men at Arms* soon quit the Field. But I must take some notice of them, lest they be magnified, by being slighted.

His next Argument is, *That I contradict myself*: I hope I have in the beginning made him unwilling to repeat such a Charge against me, till he hath cleared himself. But wherein is it? In another place, he saith, *I deny any Absolute Certainty as to Tradition attesting the Books of Scripture; which in the Conference I asserted.* I have looked in the Place he refers to, and there I find nothing like it. I deny the Necessity of any Infallible Society of Men, either to Attest or Explain the Scripture. Where, by an *Infallible Society* of Men, I mean such as have a *Divine Assistance* to that purpose: And what is this to the *Absolute Certainty* we have of the *Books* of *Scripture* by *Universal Tradition*? But he urges it further, *If this Society be not Infallible, then*

it

it is Fallible; and if it be Fallible, then we cannot be more than fallibly Certain, and ſo we can have no abſolute Certainty from a Fallible Teſtimony. This is the whole force of what he ſaith. To which I Anſwer,

I. I underſtand no ſuch thing as *Infallibility* in Mankind, but by *immediate Divine Aſſiſtance*, I grant, that the Holy Spirit may, where he pleaſes, preſerve the Minds of Men from any poſſibility of miſtake, as to thoſe things, wherein it doth inlighten them; but ſet aſide this, there is no ſuch thing as *Infallibility*; the utmoſt is a *rational Certainty* built on clear and convincing Motives. Where the *Motives* are meerly *probable*, there may be *Opinion*, but no *Certainty*; where the Evidence is thought ſo ſtrong as to determine Aſſent, there is a *Certainty* as to the Mind; as when we commonly ſay, we are *certain* of ſuch things, we mean no more, than that we firmly believe them; but when the Evidence is the higheſt, which in point of Reaſon the thing is capable of, then there is that which I call *Abſolute Certainty*; *i. e.* ſuch as depends not meerly on the *Aſſent* of the Mind, but the *Evidence* which juſtifies that Aſſent.

II If by being *fallibly Certain*, he means any *Suſpicion*, that notwithſtanding ſuch Evidence in all its Circumſtances, *I may be deceived*, then I utterly deny it; for otherwiſe I could not be *abſolutely Certain*; but if he means only, that there is no *Divine Infallibility* (and I know no other) then I own that there is ſtill *human Fallibility* conſiſtent with this *Abſolute Certainty*. But Mr. *S.* will have *Abſolute Certainty to be Infallible*: If nothing will ſatisfie him, but *Human* (*i. e.* fallible) *Infallibility*, much good may it do him, but I much

rather chuſe proper Terms, which I know the certain meaning of, than improper, though they make a far greater Noiſe. I do own an *Abſolute Certainty* in ſome Acts of the Mind by *inward Perception*, as that *I think*, *I doubt*, and *that I am*; I do own an *Abſolute Certainty* as to common *Objects* of *Senſe*; and as to ſome Deductions of Reaſon; I do own an *Abſolute Certainty* as to ſome *Matters* of *Fact*, by a Concurrence of Circumſtances; but for all that, I do not account Human Nature *Infallible*, nor this an *Infallible Certainty*, unleſs it be taken in another Senſe than *Divines* take it in. For even the *Divines* of the Church of *Rome* as well as Ours make a difference between a *Human* and *Acquiſite Certainty*, and that which is *Divine* and *Infallible*. And if Mr. *S.* by *Divine* means *Human*, and by *Infallible* no more than *Certain*, he muſt not think he hath gained any great matter, when he hath made uſe of *Words* in an improper and unuſual Senſe.

Firſt Letter, p. 25. III. His next Argument is, That *our Rule of Faith is common to all the Hereſies in the World, which pretend Scripture, as well as we.* This is juſt the Old *Sceptical* Argument againſt *Certainty*; if there be any ſuch thing as *Certainty*, you muſt aſſign ſuch a *Criterion which is not common to Truth and Falſhood*; but if you cannot aſſign any ſuch Mark of Truth, which may not as well agree to what is Falſe, then there is no ſuch thing as *Certainty* to be had. In Matters of this nature, the Proof muſt not lie in *generals*, but we muſt come to *particulars*, to ſhew the *Grounds* of our *Certainty*, viz. *as to the Trinity, and Incarnation of Chriſt*, and then if we cannot ſhew why we believe thoſe Points, and reject the oppoſite Hereſies, as *Arianiſm*, *Sabellianiſm*, *Eutychianiſm*, &c. then we are to be blamed for want of

Certainty

Certainty in theſe Points, but not before. *But this*, he ſaith, *is to make Light and Darkneſs very conſiſtent, and Chriſt and Belial very good Friends.* It ſeems then, there is no difference to be found *by the Rule* of *Scripture*, between the *Doctrine of Chriſt* and the *Devil.* Is this in Truth your avowed Principle? Do you in earneſt believe the Scripture to be ſuch a *Chaos*, where there is no difference of *Light* and *Darkneſs*, and that nothing but *Confuſion* can be found in it; And we cannot tell by it, whether we are *to Worſhip God or the Devil?* If Mr. *S.* grants, that there is enough in Scripture to diſtinguiſh theſe two; then it is a *Rule* ſo far, as to put a difference between *Light and Darkneſs*, between *Chriſt and Belial*; and ſo theſe Expreſſions muſt be diſowned as little leſs than *Blaſphemous*, for all his pitiful Defence of them in his *Second Letter*; which is, *That he never ſaid that Chriſt and Belial could be reconciled, or advanced any Poſition that implied it.* But he ſaid, *That to make Scripture our Rule, is to make Light and Darkneſs conſiſtent, and Chriſt and Belial very good Friends.* And is not this *Blaſphemy* againſt *Scripture?* and implies, that if we go by that *Rule* only, *they may be very good Friends.* How can this be, unleſs he aſſerts that by Scripture alone, we can find no certain difference *between Light and Darkneſs, between Chriſt and Belial?* Let Mr. *S.* Anſwer to this, and not think to eſcape with ſuch a poor Evaſion. If he owns the *Scripture* a *Certain Rule* as to the difference of *Chriſt and Belial, and Light and Darkneſs*, then we have gained thus much, that in ſome Matters of very great Moment, the *Scripture* is a very *ſufficient Rule and Ground of Certainty*, as to all Points between Us and Infidels. And if it be ſo, as to theſe Points, then why not as well as to other Points conſequent upon theſe? *If Chriſt be the Eternal Son of*

Second Letter, p. 73, 74.

God in opposition to *Heathen Deities*, and we can know him by *Scripture* to be so, then we may as well know him to be the *Eternal Son of God* in opposition to *Arians* and *Socinians*. If against the *Heathens* we can prove from *Scripture*, that *the Word was made Flesh*, Why will not this as well hold against *Nestorians* and *Eutychians?* And so the *Scripture* becomes a very *sufficient Rule* to distinguish *Light* and *Darkness* in such Points among *Christians* too. For, is it ever the less fit to be a *Rule*, because both Parties own it? *But they differ about the Sense of it, and therefore Controversies can never be ended by it.* If Church-History deceive us not, the greatest Controversies were ended by it, before General Councils were heard of; and more than have been since. Many of those we read of in the First Ages were quite laid asleep, as *Theodoret* observes; but since *Church-Authority* interposed, in the most Reasonable manner, some Differences have been perpetuated, as appears by the *Nestorian* and *Eutychian* Controversies. I do not blame the *Authority* of *Councils*, proceeding as they then did by the Rule of Scriptures, but the Event shewed, that the most probable Means, are sometimes very ineffectual for *ending Controversies*. And those which Men think will most effectually Suppress *Heresies*, do often give a New Life and Spirit to them: So vain are the Imaginations of Men about putting an *End to Controversies*, till they do come to a *Certainty* about the *true Sense of Scripture*. It is possible to stop Mens Mouths by Force and Power, but nothing brings Men to a true Satisfaction, but inward Conviction as to the *true Sense of Scripture*; and there can be no *rational Certainty* as to these Points without it. If Controversies be not ended, let us not blame the *Wisdom* of *Providence*; for God doth not always appoint

Theod. Haret. Fab. 1. 2, 3.

point the Means moſt effectual in our Judgment, but ſuch as are moſt ſuitable to his own Deſign. And we ſee Reaſon enough to blame the Folly and weakneſs, the Prejudice and Partiality, the Wilfulneſs and Obſtinacy of Mankind; and till Human Nature be brought to a better Temper, we may deſpair of ſeeing any *End* of *Controverſies*. Men may Diſpute, and for all that I know, will do to the Worlds End, about the Method to put an End to Diſputes. For, the Controverſies about *Certainty* and *Fatality* have been always the Matters of Debate, among diſputing Men, under ſeveral Names and *Hypotheſes*, and are like ſo to be to the general Conflagration.

IV. He ſaith, *Scripture is not our diſtinguiſhing Rule of Faith, but our own particular Judgments about Scripture; for that which diſtinguiſhes my Rule from that of the moſt abominable Hereſies, can only be my own Judgment upon the Letter of Scripture, and wriggle which way I will, there it will, and muſt end at laſt.* I wiſh Mr. *S.* had been a little better converſant in the old Diſputes about *Certainty*; for it would have ſaved me the trouble of anſwering ſome impertinent Objections; ſuch as this before us. For they would have been thought mean Logicians, who could not put a difference between the *Rule of Judgment*, and the *Judgment* which a Man made according to the Rule. Suppoſe the Queſtion were about *Senſe*, whether that were a *certain Rule*, or not, to judge by; and *Epicurus* ſhould affirm it, and ſay he ſo firmly believed it, that he judged the Sun to be no bigger than he ſeemed to his Senſes; would not he have been thought ridiculous, who ſhould have ſaid, this Fancy of *Epicurus* was his *Rule*? The *Rule* he went by was in it ſelf certain; but he made a wrong Judgment upon it; but that was not his Rule. *First Letter, p. 26.*

So

So it is here. We declare the *Scripture* to be our only certain and ſtanding *Rule*, whereby we are to judge in Matters of Faith; and we underſtand it as well as we can, and form our Judgments by it; but doth it hence follow, that our *Judgment* is our *Rule?* We may be deceived in our Judgments, but our Rule is *Infallible*; we may differ in our *Judgments*, but our *Rule* is one and the ſame. And how is it poſſible for thoſe who differ in *Judgment*, to have the *ſame Rule*, if our *Rule* and our *Judgments* be the ſame? For then their *Rules* muſt be as different as their Judgments. I know not what Modern *Logick* Mr. *S.* learnt; but I am ſure he learnt not this way of *Reaſoning* from the Antient *Philoſophers*, who diſcourſed about the *Criterion* after another manner than our great pretender to *Logick* doth.

Firſt Letter, p. 26. V. He objects, *That our People do not make Scripture the Rule of their Faith, not one in a Million relying upon it; and therefore this pretence of mine*, he ſaith, *looks like a meer Jeſt; and he cannot perſwade himſelf, that I am in earneſt, while I advance ſuch a Paradox.* What doth *J. S.* mean, to call one of the Articles of our Church, *a Jeſt* and *a Paradox?* For the Words of our Sixth *Article*, are, Holy Scripture containeth all things neceſſary to Salvation: ſo that whatſoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any Man, that it ſhould be believed as an Article of Faith, or be thought requiſite or neceſſary to Salvation.

Doth *J. S.* now take this for a *Paradox* among us? I aſſure him, I love not to make *Jeſts* about *Scripture*, nor *matters of Faith* and *Salvation*. But wherein doth this *Jeſt* lie? *Why*, forſooth, *I make the People to make Scripture their Rule, and not one in a Million thinks of relying on it.* Have they then any other *Rule* of *Faith*, which

which they *rely upon?* What is it, I pray? Is it the *Churches Infallibility?* No. Is it *Pius* the Fourth's Creed? No truly, *while they are Children, they believe Tradition.* Now, I think, *J. S.* hath hit it. *Tradition* is indeed a *Rule of Faith* for *Children*; who are very apt *ſimply to believe their Fathers and Teachers.* But ſuppoſe, *they come to years of Diſcretion*, what Rule of Faith have they then? Have they a *Judgment of Diſcretion* then? *No*; *this is another Jeſt.* For he ſuppoſes all our People to be a dull ſort of *Animals*, that underſtand nothing of *Scripture* or *Faith* themſelves, (I wonder then, that they make no more Converts among them) but truſt their Parſon for all; For, *Boves arabant & Aſinæ paſcebantur juxta eos*; therefore the People have no *Judgment* of *Diſcretion*; I hope *J. S.* knows whoſe *Jeſt* or rather *Argument* that was. Whatever he inſinuates, as to our People, I have Reaſon to believe far better of them; and that all thoſe who mind their Salvation do ſeriouſly read, and conſider the *Holy Scriptures*, as the *Rule* of their *Faith.* But if in *Matters* of *Opinion*, or in doubtful or obſcure Places, they make uſe of the Skill, and Aſſiſtance of their Teachers, wherein are they to blame? The *Scripture* is ſtill their *Rule*, but the help of their Teachers is for the better underſtanding it. And cannot our Logician diſtinguiſh between the *Rule of Faith*, and the *Helps* to *underſtand* it? Suppoſe now a Mother or a Nurſe ſhould quit *honeſt Tradition*, as *J. S.* here calls it; and be ſo ill inclined, as to teach Children to ſpell, and to *read in the New Teſtament*, and by that means they come by degrees to underſtand the Doctrine which Chriſt preached, and the Miracles which he wrought, and from thence to believe in Chriſt, and to obey his Commands, I deſire to know, into what theſe Perſons do Reſolve their Faith.

Page 27.

2.2.9.4.2.6.

P.

Is

Is it indeed into thoſe who taught them to read? or into the *New Teſtament*, as the *Ground* of their Faith? When they have been all along told, that the Scripture alone is the Word of God; and whatever they are to believe, it is becauſe it is contained therein. And ſo, by whatever means they come to underſtand the Scripture, it is that alone they take for the *Rule* and *Foundation* of their *Faith*. If a Man were reſolved to obſerve *Hippocrates* his Rules; but finds himſelf uncapable of underſtanding him, and therefore deſires a *Phyſicians* Help; I would fain know, whether he relies upon the Skill of his Interpreter, or the Authority of *Hippocrates*? It is poſſible his Interpreter may in ſome doubtful and obſcure Places have miſtaken *Hippocrates* his Meaning; but however, the *Reaſon* of his keeping to the *Rules* is not upon the Account of the *Interpreter*, but of *Hippocrates*. *But ſuppoſe a College of Phyſicians interpret* Hippocrates *otherwiſe, is he bound then to believe his own Interpreter againſt the Senſe of the College?* I anſwer, If a College of *Phyſicians* ſhould tranſlate *Bread* for *Cheeſe*; or by *Phlebotomy* ſhould declare was meant cutting of *Arteries*, or of a Mans Throat, let them preſume to be never ſo *Infallible*, I would truſt any ſingle Interpreter, with the help of *Lexicons* and *Common Senſe* againſt them all; but eſpecially, if I can produce *Galen*, and the old *Phyſicians*, who underſtood *Hippocrates* beſt, on my ſide. This is our Caſe, as to the People, about *diſputable Points*; we do not ſet up our own *Authority* againſt a *Church* pretending to be *Infallible*; we never require them to truſt wholly to our Judgments; but we give them our beſt Aſſiſtance, and call in the *old Interpreters* of the *Church*; and we deſire them to uſe their own Reaſon and Judgment with Divine Aſſiſtance for ſettling their Minds.

If

If People be negligent and careleſs, and will not take neceſſary pains to inform themſelves, which Mr. *S.* ſuggeſts, we are not bound to give an Account of thoſe, who do not obſerve our Directions. And I never yet knew the Negligent and Careleſs brought into a Diſpute of Religion; for in this Caſe, we muſt ſuppoſe People to act according to the Principles of the Religion they own; otherwiſe their Examples ſignifie no more againſt our Doctrine, than *Debauchery* doth againſt the Rules of *Hippocrates*.

But ſuppoſe, ſaith Mr. *S. that one of my own Flock ſhould tell me, that I have erred in interpreting Scripture, he deſires to know, what I would ſay to him.* This is a very eaſie Queſtion, and ſoon anſwer'd. I would endeavour to Convince him as well as I could. *And is that all?* And what would *J. S.* do more? Would he tell him he was Infallible? I think not; but only as *honeſt Tradition* makes him ſo, and how far that goes towards it, I ſhall examine afterwards. Page 29.

Well; but ſuppoſe *John Biddle againſt the Miniſter of his Pariſh, and the whole Church of* England *to boot, underſtands Scripture to be plainly againſt a Trinity and Chriſt's Divinity.*

And it is but fair for me to ſuppoſe him, maintaining his Hereſie againſt *J. S.* and let any one judge whether of us be more likely to Convince him. He owns the Scripture, and confeſſes if we can prove our Doctrine from thence, he will yield; but he laughs at Oral Tradition, and thinks it a *Jeſt* for any one to prove ſuch a Doctrine by it. And truly, if it were not for the Proofs from Scripture, I do much Queſtion, whether any Argument from meer Tradition could ever confute ſuch a one as *John Biddle*. But when we offer ſuch Proofs, as are acknowledged to be ſufficient in themſelves, we

take the only proper way to give him Reaſonable Satisfaction. *Suppoſe he will not be convinced.* Who can help that? Chriſt himſelf met with Wilful and Obſtinate Unbelievers. And was this any diſparagement to his Doctrine? God himſelf hath never promiſed to cure thoſe who ſhut their Eyes againſt the Light.

Page 29. *Shall the Believing Church then have the Liberty to interpret Scripture againſt the Teaching Church?* Who ever aſſerted any ſuch thing? We only ſay, that the People are to underſtand the Grounds of their Faith; and to judge by the beſt Helps they can, what Doctrine is agreeable to Scripture, and to embrace what is ſo, and to reject what is not: But among thoſe Helps we take in, not barely the perſonal Aſſiſtance of their own Guide, but the Evidence he brings, as to the Senſe of the Teaching Church, in the beſt and pureſt Ages.

It is very ſtrange, that after this, it ſhould preſent-
Page 29. ly follow, *'Tis evident hence, that Tradition of our Fathers and Teachers, and not Scriptures Letter, is indeed our Rule; and by it we interpret Scripture.* If this be ſo *evident*, then how is it poſſible, we ſhould ſet up the *Eccleſia Credens* againſt the *Eccleſia Docens*; as he charged us juſt before. If *Tradition* be our Rule, and we interpret Scripture by it, what fault then are we guilty of, if Tradition be ſuch an Infallible Rule? But, methinks, this *Hence* looks a little *Illogically* upon the Premiſes; and if this be his *Concluſive Evidence*, he muſt excuſe me as to the making it a Ground of my Faith.

But he allows, *That we ſet up Scripture as our Rule, when we Diſpute againſt them; but when that is done, we ſet up our own Authority over the People, and do not allow*

allow them that Priviledge againſt us, which we take againſt the Church of Rome. This is all the ſtrength of what I can make out of that Paragraph. For if all Writing were like his, it would be the beſt Argument for Oral Tradition; his Senſe is ſo intricate, and his Concluſions ſo remote from his Premiſes. Juſt before he ſaid, *'Tis evident hence that we follow Tradition.* And preſently, *'Tis as evident we do not follow it, and ſet up our own Authority againſt it. We do interpret Scripture by Tradition;* and yet immediately, *we ſet up Scripture againſt Tradition. We plead for the Peoples Right to a Judgment of Diſcretion;* and yet *we do not allow them a Judgment of Diſcretion.* What inviſible links hath Oral Tradition to connect things, that ſeem ſo far aſunder?

But however it be expreſſed or connected, his meaning is, *That we only ſet up Scripture againſt the Church of* Rome, *and then ſet up our own Authority over the People.* This is not poſſible, if we do allow them a *Judgment* of *Diſcretion*; and this is one of the things he ſo much charges upon me; and ſaith, *He never read any Proteſtant that puts Matters more into private hands than I do*; and yet in the very next Page, he ſaith, *I deny the People the ſame Priviledge againſt Paſtoral Authority.* How can I deny them ſuch a Priviledge, if I put Matters into their hands above any other Proteſtant? I do not know, that I do in the leaſt differ from the ſixth Article of our Church; nor do I take off from the due Authority of Biſhops and Paſtors of Churches. But all our Diſpute is, about this *Judgment of Diſcretion*, whether it be allowable to People, and how far. Page 29.

In his *Third Letter* he reſumes this Argument, and thither I follow him, that I may lay things together into Third Letter, p. 92.

into ſome Method. The words he cavils at, are, "If "we have the Conſent of all Chriſtian Churches againſt "the only pretended Infallible Judge, we have their "Conſent likewiſe, that every Man is to judge for "his own Salvation. What hurt is there in this? *It ſeems then nothing will content us now but Infallibility.* Was there ever ſuch an awkard Man at Reaſoning? It follows indeed, that either there muſt be an Infallible Judge, or every Man muſt judge for himſelf. *Do I then allow no Authority to Church-Governors, that do not pretend to Infallibility?* Yes, very much, while they do not pretend to Impoſe on our Faith, by a pretence to Infallibility. But what Occaſion do I give for this, when I ſay only, *That every Man muſt judge for his own Salvation*; and yet he had the Conſcience to leave this out in repeating my Senſe, but two lines after. May not you miſtake or pervert to Day, what you heard Yeſterday, when I find you miſtaking or perverting my Senſe, but at two lines diſtance? And then run on in a long Diſcourſe, as though you had taken the true Senſe of my Words. Is not this a fit Perſon *to play out Mr. G's Game*, who *ſhuffles* in ſo ſtrange a manner, and ſo openly *plays falſe Cards?* Where did I ever diſpute againſt Church-Authority in due propoſing Matters of Faith, provided that every Man is to judge for his own
P. 93. Salvation? *But I have*, he ſaith, *an aking Tooth at the Churches intermeddling in Matters of Faith.* From whence doth this appear? This muſt either ariſe from great Ignorance, as to the Right of Judging every Man hath as to his own Salvation; or from a Malicious Deſign, to expoſe me to all Church-Governors; but I pity his Ignorance, and deſpiſe his Malice. What pleaſant Entertainment doth he make with the *Sober Enquirer?* *'Tis pity* (ſaith he) *but he had a blew Apron on, and a Tub*

to Hold-forth in; as a *Sober Enquirer* may poſſibly find ſome Pretenders to *Infallibility* have done in their Time. But what is the meaning of all this ado about a *Sober Enquirer?* I had ſaid many years ago, "That the Scri-"ptures being owned, as containing in them the whole "Will of God ſo plainly revealed, that no Sober En-"quirer can miſs of what is neceſſary for Salvation, "there can be no Neceſſity ſuppoſed of an Infallible "Society of Men either to Atteſt or Explain theſe Wri-"tings among Chriſtians, any more than there was for "ſome Ages before Chriſt, of ſuch a Body of Men "among the Jews, to Atteſt or Explain to them the "Writings of *Moſes* and the Prophets. And where lies the Hereſie or Danger of this Doctrine? If I ſaid that no Sober Enquirer can miſs of things neceſſary to Salvation in Scripture, it is no more than St. *Chryſoſtom*, St. *Auguſtin*, *Aquinas*, and other School-men, had ſaid before me; and *Were they for blew Aprons and Tubs to Hold forth in?* Nay, to ſhew how unskilful *J. S.* is in the Writers of his own Church, (if they do own him) even *Bellarmin* himſelf grants as much as I ſay. For being to Anſwer that Place *Jam.* 1. 5. *If any Man lack Wiſdom, let him ask it of God, who giveth liberally*, &c. he Anſwers, This is to be underſtood of *Sapientia neceſſaria ad Salutem*; ſo then a Sober Enquirer praying to God to give him Wiſdom, ſhall not want that which is Neceſſary to his Salvation. And he quotes ſeveral Paſſages of St. *Auguſtin* to prove, *that Prayer obtains nothing Infallibly but that which is neceſſary or uſeful to the Salvation of him that prays.* If this be then obtained Infallibly, then we ſee an Infallible Ground of Certainty, as to what is Neceſſary or Uſeful to Salvation. *Bellarmin* indeed ſaith, that a Gift of Interpretation is not to be had by Prayer; and, Do I ever ſay it is?

Bell. de verbo Dei, l. 3. c. 6. ſect. Reſpondeo.

is? Did I ever give the leaſt Countenance to Enthuſiaſtick Pretenders, or to the Breakers of the Laws and Orders of our Eſtabliſhed Church? What means then theſe ſpiteful Inſinuations? Doth the Man hope to raiſe Himſelf by expoſing Me? Or to be careſſed by *F.P.* and *F.W.* by the brave attempt of throwing Dirt ſo plainly in my Face? Which will never ſtick, being ſo unskilfully thrown, either to my Prejudice, or his Advantage.

But this Matter about the Peoples Judgment of Diſcretion, muſt not be thus paſs'd over. For, he reſumes it at the End of his *Third Letter*, and thought it a good reliſhing bit to conclude with. And towards the very end, he begins to ſtate the Controverſie, this true Logician having forgotten it before, or reſerved it for a Diſert at the laſt.

Third Letter, p. 99. *To come cloſer* (ſaith he) *and take a more diſtinct view of this Judgment of Diſcretion.* It was even time to come cloſer in the 99th. *p.* of the *Third Letter*. Alas for Mr. *G.!* he is like to have a hopeful Game of it, when his Subſtitute talks at this rate at the very end of the Game. But let us ſee what feats he will do now he *comes cloſer*. *Now he will acquaint me, how far he allows it, and far and how in what he rejects it.* This is well; but why no ſooner? He was at another Game before, *viz.* two or three throws at the *Sober Enquirer*, and having knock'd him down with his *blew Apron* and *Tub*, he now comes to *T.* G's *Cards* again. And let us ſee how well he plays them. Firſt, He grants, *That every Man is to judge for his own Salvation*; *i. e.* he yields what the *Sober Enquirer* aimed at, and now methinks he deſires *the blew Apron and Tub, to Hold-forth* himſelf. Secondly, He ſaith, *All Mankind are agreed in it.* It ſeems then the *Fanaticks* are *true Catholicks* in Mr. *S*'s Opinion. Thirdly, He yields, *That every Man*

is

is to judge of the beſt way to Salvation, and of all the Controverſies between Them and Us. Now the *Tub* is turn'd to a *Chair*, and the *Holder-forth* become a *Judge of Controverſies.* Nay, he goes ſo far as to ſay, *the contrary Tenet is ridiculous, as what's moſt*; nay, that it is *ſottiſhneſs to hold it*; *and to deprive Mankind of this Priviledge of judging thus, is to debar him of the Light and Uſe of his Reaſon, when it is moſt uſeful for him.* Is not all this very obliging? But where now lies the difference? *Why*, truly, *if his Diſcretion leads him to the Infallible Rule of Tradition, all is well*; *but if not, it is no longer Diſcretion.* What? has he been Judge of all the Controverſies between Us already, and is he to ſeek for his *Rule* ſtill? What *Diſcretion* had he all that time, to judge without a Rule! What a *Judge* of *Controverſies* have we found at laſt? Methinks the *Sober Enquirer* far exceeds him in point of common *Diſcretion*; for he never pretended to judge without a Rule, much leſs all the Controverſies between Us. But this diſcreet Judge of all Controverſies firſt determins all the Points; and when he hath done this, he finds out his Rule. Of all the Judges of Controverſies that have been yet talked of, commend me to this ſet up by *J. S.* For, how is it poſſible for him to judge amiſs, who had no Rule to judge by?

You ſee (ſaith he) *how we allow them the Uſe of their Reaſon and Judgment of Diſcretion, till it brings them to find a certain Authority, and when they have once found that, the ſame Judgment of Diſcretion which ſhewed them that Authority was Abſolutely Certain, obliges them to truſt it, when it tells them what is Chriſt's Faith, without uſing their private Judgments any longer about the particular Points themſelves thus aſcertained to them, but ſubmitting to it.* To which I Anſwer, p. 102.

L The

I. The ſame reaſon which enabled Men to find out this *Infallible Guide*, or *Certain Authority* will help them to judge concerning this Authority, and the Matters propoſed by it. For, either he hath a Rule to find out this *Authority*, or he hath none; if he hath a Rule, it muſt be either Scripture, or pure Natural Reaſon. If Scripture, that only affords *Fallible Certainty*, he ſaith over and over, and ſo a Man can never come certainly to this Authority. And if the Foundation be uncertain, what can the Rule do? But Mr. *S.* doth not pretend *Scripture*, but *Reaſon*, for his Infallible Rule. Then I demand, whether Reaſon doth afford an Infallible Ground of Certainty, as to this Certain Authority or not? If it doth, we are yet but *Fallibly Certain*; if it doth not, then what need this Certain Authority; for in the Opinion of all Reaſonable Men, *certain Reaſon* is better than *certain Authority*. And he cannot deny the Certainty of Reaſon, who builds the Certainty of Authority upon it.

II. Suppoſe the particular Points propoſed by this Certain Authority be repugnant to that Certainty of Reaſon, by which I am required to believe it: As ſuppoſe this Authority tells me, I am no longer to rely upon my Reaſon, but barely to ſubmit, although the Matter propoſed be never ſo much againſt it; What is to be done in this Caſe? I am to believe this Certain Authority on the Account of Reaſon, and that requires me to believe ſuch things as overthrow the Certainty of Reaſon; How is it poſſible for me to rely on this Certain Authority on the Certainty of Reaſon, when that Authority tells me, there is no Certainty in Reaſon?

III. Muſt I believe *Reaſon* to be *Certain* juſt ſo far and no further? But who ſets the bounds? Hath God Almighty done it? When and where? I may and ought to uſe my Reaſon in ſearching after this Certain Authority, and judge all Controverſies in order to the finding it out; all this is allowed; but as ſoon as ever this Certain Authority is diſcover'd, then *Goodnight Reaſon*; I have now no more Uſe for you. But who bid you be ſo ungrateful to that Certain Reaſon, which conducted you ſo far? It is very poſſible it may be as Uſeful ſtill, why then do you turn Reaſon off ſo unkindly after ſo good Service?

IV. Are all People capable of this Certain Reaſon, or not? It requires, it ſeems, a great deal of Logick to prove this Certain Authority, or this Infallible Guide by Reaſon; and I am one of thoſe that think it can never be done: Suppoſe then, ſome of us duller People can never comprehend the force of this Reaſon, which is to lead us to an Infallible Guide, What is like to become of us Uncapable People? Are we all to be damned for Dunces and Blockheads? No, not ſo neither: This is really ſome Comfort. For then it is to be hoped we may go to Heaven without finding out this *Certain Authority*; and then we may have True Faith without it. This is ſtill better and better. And then I pray what need have I to find out this Certain Authority at all, if I may have True Faith and be Saved without it?

V. I have greater Certainty by *Reaſon* of the *Certain Authority* of *Scripture*, than you can have of the *Certain Authority* of *Tradition*. Here is *Reaſon* on both ſides, and *Authority* on both ſides; but I ſay there is no Compariſon between either the *Reaſon* or the *Authority*.

The *Reason* to believe the *Scripture*, is so incomparably beyond the Reason to believe *Oral Tradition*. And the *Authority* of *Scripture* hath so much greater Force on the Consciences of Men, that it is very extraordinary among those who own Scripture to be the Word of God, to find them compared in Point of *Authority*. For, we must deal plainly in this Matter; the Scripture we look on as the *Rule* of our *Faith*, because it is the *Word of God*. If you do not own it to be so, but resolve all into *Tradition*, we know what you are; but if you do own the *Scripture* to be of *Divine Revelation*, how can you pretend to set up any *Certain Authority* in Comparison with it?

VI. If this *Certain Authority* be only to lead us into the *Certain Sense* of Scripture, then it must be either into the *Sense* of plain Places, or of difficult and obscure: If of plain Places, then it is to kindle a Torch to behold the Sun; if of obscure Places, then who hath appointed this Certain Authority to Explain them? Who is to appoint such a Certain Authority in the Church, to Explain his Word, but God Himself? And we desire to see some plain Places, that set up this Authority to Explain those which are obscure and doubtful. We think it our Duty to read and *search the Scripture*, and especially the *New Testament*, where we find very great Occasion for this Certain Authority to be mentioned. We find Churches newly settled, and many Disputes and Controversies started among them; and those of great and dangerous Consequence; we find the Apostles giving frequent Advice to these Churches with respect to these Differences, and with great earnestness giving Caution against Seducers, and warning them of the danger of them; but not one

Word

Word can we find in all their Epiſtles tending this way, or mentioning any *Certain Authority* they were to ſubmit to, for the putting an End to all Controverſies. This is really a Matter of ſo much Concernment to the whole Chriſtian World, that if any ſuch thing had been in the Deſign of Chriſtianity, I can never believe that the Apoſtles would have omitted it in their ſeveral Epiſtles. Had not they ſufficient Care of the *Certainty* of Mens Minds, and of the Peace of the Church? Was it a *Secret* concealed then from them? Or not thought fit to be communicated by them, when it was moſt neceſſary to prevent the early Corruptions and Errours of the Chriſtian Churches? But they are ſo far from it, that I cannot find any Intimation to that purpoſe in all their Writings, although they had the faireſt Occaſions for it.

VII. If Men by *Certain Reaſon* have found out this *Certain Authority*, What are they to do with this *Certain Reaſon* afterwards? Methinks it is a little hard for ever to diſcharge ſo uſeful a Servant immediately after ſo extraordinary a piece of Service, as the finding out an *Infallible Guide*. We do not find the Apoſtles directing the People not to make uſe of their Underſtandings, becauſe their Guides were Infallible. I am apt to think the Apoſtles were as *Infallible* as *Tradition* or *Church-Authority* ever ſince; and therefore what allowance was made by them to a *Judgment* of *Diſcretion* is ſtill to continue. What doth St. *Paul* mean to ſpeak to the *Corinthians* in ſuch a manner, *I ſpeak as to Wiſe Men, judge ye what I ſay*: How different is this from, *I ſpeak by an Infallible Spirit, and ye are not to judge what I ſay?* When he ſaith to the *Theſſalonians*, *Prove all things*, Doth he mean, *Swallow all things, and Prove nothing?* When St. *John* ſaith, *Try the Spirits, whether* 1 *Cor.* 10. 15. 1 *Theſſ.* 5. 21. 1 *Joh.* 4. 1.

they are of God, Doth he only mean, till they had found a Certain Authority? Did not they believe St. *John*'s Authority to be Certain? If not, to what purpose did he write this Epistle to them? If he did, he supposed them still to have a liberty of Judging, even those who pretended to Inspiration. *For, many false Prophets are gone out into the world.* And there are certain Rules and Marks to judge of the Pretences to an Infallible Spirit, which were in vain assigned, if they were not to judge by them.

VIII. Suppose Men differ about this *Certain Authority*, wherein it lies, and how far it extends; Are not they to exercise their *Reason* still about this? Suppose some pretend, that it lies in an *Infallible Assistance* which Christ hath promised to his Church in all Ages; and Others say, this is impossible to be a Ground of Faith, because it is it self an Article of Faith: Must not a Man exercise his Reason about this? Here is *Certain Authority* pleaded; but Others say, there is *Certain Reason* against this Pretence of *Certain Authority*; and they must grant I must follow *Certain Reason*, though against *Certain Authority*. Again, Others say, the *Certain Authority* of *Oral Tradition* is a Novel, vain and dangerous Opinion, *destructive of Faith*, and leading to *Heresie* and *Atheism*; What is to be done in this Case? Must our Reason be quitted, and Men not be allowed to judge of this *Authority* by it? Yes, *till they come to own it, and then they are to judge no longer*; *i. e.* put out your Eyes once, and ye need never think of opening them after. Be very circumspect in the Choice of your Way, till you come to a *Precipice*, and when you are come there, be sure to throw your self from it headlong, and there is an *End* of *Controversies*. But we do

not

not judge this a very Reaſonable Method; but think he had much better keep upon plain Ground, and uſe the beſt Method he can to find the true Way; and if his Judgment, will ſerve him to find the *Way* to a *Precipice*, we think it will much better ſerve him to keep him from it; And that he had better bear with ſome imperfection of his Sight, than put out his Eyes that he may be the more quietly led, he knows not whither.

There is only one thing more, which deſerves to be taken notice of, about this Argument, *viz.* that *J. S.* ſaith, *I expreſly exclude the Churches Help*; which is, as he triumphantly concludes his Third Letter, *The Firſt Principle, nay the Quinteſſence of all Hereſie, Fanaticiſm in the Egg, perfect Enthuſiaſm when hatcht, and downright Atheiſm when fledg'd.* This is a parting Blow indeed. It is the bite of an Angry Viper, at its laſt Gaſp, when it puts its utmoſt force into the Venom, and hopes even dying to deſtroy. Others love to conclude gently, but *J. S.* is a Man by himſelf, and as though he were writing Epigrams, would reſerve his Sting for the laſt. But what Ground is there for all this venemous Froth? Even juſt as much as there was for the Author of *Pax vobis* to ſay, *that I am for introducing Paganiſm*; or for another to make me *the Founder of Anti-Catholick, and Anti Chriſtian Doctrines*, whereas I profeſs to own no other than what have been received in this Church ever ſince the Reformation. But ſome Mens *Spleen* and *Gall* muſt have a Vent leſt it deſtroy them. It is ſome ſatisfaction to me to think that none but ſuch, who either *Oppoſe* or *Betray* our Church, ſet themſelves thus to defame me; and it is a great comfort to find ſuch feeble Reaſoning, where ſo much Spite and Malice is diſcover'd. Thus

Third Letter. Page, 104.

it

it is here, with *J. S.* he could merit nothing without giving me hard words, and becauſe many look on the Beginning and End of a Book, who mind nothing elſe in it; therefore he hath here put together as the Conſequence of my Doctrine, no leſs than *Hereſie, Fanaticiſm, Enthuſiaſm, and downright Atheiſm.* He thought he could not make my Caſe Equal with his own, unleſs I were charged with *Hereſie*, and *Principles leading to Atheiſm.* But he is charged by the moſt *Zealous Catholicks*, and in reſpect to his avowed Principles; but my charge here is by an enraged Adverſary; and for ſuch a Doctrine which is owned by all Men of Underſtanding in both Churches, and if I may name him among them, even by *J. S.* himſelf. My words are,

2d. Letter, p. 21. *If it be ſaid, that the Churches Power will become explicit to any ſober Enquirer, then every ſuch Perſon may without the Churches help find out all neceſſary Points of Faith.* And where lies the Hereſie, the Enthuſiaſm, the Atheiſm of this Doctrine, which I have already ſhewed was aſſerted both by Fathers and School-men? And *J. S.* himſelf grants, that every Man is to judge for his own Salvation; and of the beſt way to his Salvation, and of all the Controverſies between them and us, and eſpecially of the true Grounds of Faith; and all this without the Churches help. And if he can do all this, I deſire to know whether he cannot find out all Neceſſary Points of Faith? Hath he indeed, reſolved all Controverſies, and yet wants ſome neceſſary Points of Faith? And hath he found out the Churches Authority too, without the Churches Help, and yet doth he want ſome neceſſary Points of Faith? Then it follows, that after the ſubmitting to the Churches Authority, there are ſtill neceſſary Points of Faith which may be wanting; and then an abſolute Submiſſion

miſſion is not all that is required of one that hath found out the Churches Authority. But my whole Argument there proceeds upon a Suppoſition, *viz.* that if one may without the Churches Help find out the Churches Authority in Scripture, then why not all neceſſary Points of Faith? So that it goes upon a Parity of Reaſon; and I ſee no Anſwer at all given or pretended, but only he endeavours to ſtop my Mouth with a handful of Dirt.

Thus I have diſpatched this long Argument about the *Judgment* of *Diſcretion*. And I ſhall now ſum up my Anſwer in theſe particulars.

I. Every Chriſtian, as ſuch, is bound to enquire after the true Way to Salvation, and hath a Capacity of Judging concerning it.

II. Every Chriſtian proceeding according to the beſt Rules of judging, hath Reaſon to receive the Scripture as the Rule of his Faith.

III. The Scripture is ſo plain in all Neceſſaries, and God hath promiſed ſuch Aſſiſtance to them, that ſincerely ſeek it, that none who do ſo, ſhall want the knowledge of ſuch things as are neceſſary to their Salvation.

IV. When any thing is offer'd as neceſſary to be believed in order to Salvation, every Chriſtian hath a Right and Liberty of Judging, whether it can be proved by the Scripture to be ſo neceſſary or not.

V. We do not allow to particular Perſons the ſame Faculty of Judging in doubtful Points of Controverſie, which we do as to Matters that immediately concern their Salvation.

VI. No

VI. No pretence of Infallibility or Authority can take away that Right of Judging, which was allowed them by the Apoſtles, whoſe Authority was Infallible.

VII. This Right of Judging doth not exclude the Churches due Authority as to Matters of Faith and Controverſies of Religion, (as it is declared *Art.* 20. of our Church) but all that we now plead for, is (not any Authority as to others) but a Right of Judging as to themſelves, in Matters that concern their Salvation.

VIII. The Certainty of Faith, as to them depends upon two Things; 1. The clearneſs of Scripture about them, which implies the *Certainty* of *Reaſon*. 2. The Promiſe of Divine Aſſiſtance which makes their *Faith Divine*, both as to its *Principle*, its *Ground*, and its *Effect*.

But I have not yet ended his *Objections* about our Rule of Faith; For

Third Letter. Page, 34. VI. He objects, *That we cannot neceſſarily reſolve our Faith into the Writings of the Apoſtles only.* What is the meaning *that we cannot neceſſarily reſolve it?* I think we muſt Reſolve it into a Written Rule, till we ſee another proved.

Did the Apoſtles when they went to convert the World, go with Books in their Hands, or Words in their Mouths? Doubtleſs, *with Words in their Mouths. Or were thoſe Words a jot leſs Sacred, when they came from their Mouths, than when they put them in a Book?* Not one jot. *Or laſtly, doth any Command from Chriſt appear to write the Book of Scripture, or any Revelation before hand, that it was to be a Rule of Faith to the future Church? No ſuch matter; and the Accidental Occaſions of its writing*

writing at firſt, and its Acceptation afterwards bar any ſuch pretences. On the other ſide, their grand Commiſſion was not ſcribite, *but only* prædicate Evangelium.

I have given an Account ſo lately of the Reaſons and Occaſions of writing the *Goſpels* and *Epiſtles* of the New Teſtament, that I need only here to give theſe general Anſwers.

I. Whatſoever was done as to the Writing the Books of the New Teſtament, was done by the immediate Direction and Appointment of the Holy Ghoſt. *Luke*, 1. 4. *Joh.* 20. 31

II. The Reaſon given, by the Writers of the Goſpels themſelves, is, that Matters of Faith might be delivered with the greateſt Certainty.

III. Thoſe Writings were not intended only for the Benefit of the Church then being, but for future Ages; and thence the Books of Scripture were ſo received and eſteemed in the Primitive Churches.

IV. The moſt Antient Writers of the Chriſtian Church aſſure us, that the Apoſtles wrote the ſame Doctrine they taught, and for that purpoſe, that they might be *a Pillar and Foundation of Faith.*

V. The moſt certain way we now have to know what Doctrine the Apoſtles taught is by their Writings; ſince they taught and wrote the ſame Doctrine; and we are certain we have the Doctrine they wrote, but we have no other Way to be certain what Doctrine they taught.

VII. He objects, *That the Queſtion being put concerning the New Teſtament's containing all Divine Revelations of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, I gave no direct Anſwer, but ſhuffled it off to Matters neceſſary to Salvation.* The ſetting out of this is the Subject of ſome pages. To which I give an eaſie Anſwer. *Third Letter*, p. 38. 39, 40.

The Queſtion concerning the New Teſtament containing all the Divine Revelations of Chriſt and his Apoſtles, may be taken in two Senſes.

1. As relating to the *entire Object* of Faith; and ſo the Anſwer was moſt direct and plain, to the ſecond Queſtion, "That the Rule, whereby we hold all the ſame "Doctrine, that was taught by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, "is by the Divine Revelations contained in the Writings "of the New Teſtament. For ſince we believe all that is there, and nothing but what is there, that muſt contain the Entire Object of our Faith. And the word *All* muſt relate to that.

2. As to all thoſe things which particular Perſons are bound to believe, as contained therein; and ſo the Queſtion being put, about *the Univerſal Teſtimony to aſſure us*, i. e. all particular Chriſtians, *That the New Teſtament contained all the Divine Revelations of Chriſt and his Apoſtles:* My Anſwer was direct and appoſite to this Senſe, *viz.* that the Univerſal Teſtimony of the Chriſtian Church, as to the Book of Scripture, and the Doctrine therein contained, is a ſufficient Ground to make us certain, *i. e.* all particular Perſons, of all Matters neceſſary to our Salvation. So that the Subſtance of my Anſwer lies in theſe three things.

I. That all our Faith is contained in Scripture; and thereby we hold all the Doctrine taught by Chriſt and his Apoſtles.

II. That although all particular Perſons may not reach to the entire Object of Faith contained in Scripture, yet they had thereby a Certainty, as to all Matters neceſſary to their Salvation.

III. That

III. That the Ground of Certainty as to both these, was the Universal Testimony of the Christian Church, concerning the Books of Scripture, and the Doctrine contained therein.

The Words of my Letter are, "We are to consider, "that the Scripture being our sole and entire Rule of "Faith, all Matters necessary to Salvation, must be "supposed to be contained therein; and therefore the "same Testimony, which delivers the Scripture to us, "doth deliver all the necessary Articles as contained "therein. Which are there received as in the Lump; "and if we receive the Book which contains all, we "must by the same Authority receive all contained in "it. As if a Purse be left to a Man by his Fathers "Will, full of Gold and Silver, and this by the Exe- "cutors be declared to contain all the Gold and Silver "his Father left him: they who deliver this Purse to him "from the Executors, do certainly deliver to him all "the Gold and Silver left him by his Father. But if "he suspects there was both Gold and Silver left him "by his Father, which was not in that Purse, then he "must call in Question the Integrity of the Executors, "who declared that all was contained therein. This "is now the Case of the Christian Church, as to all "Divine Truths which respect Mens Salvation; the "Primitive Church, who answer to the Executors in "the other Case, did unanimously declare that all "such Truths were undoubtedly contained in the "Written Word. Although therefore there may be a "real Difference in the nature of the Doctrines therein "contained, as there is between Gold and Silver, yet "he that receives all, must receive one as well as the "other; and the Matters of Salvation, being of *Second Letter*, p. 17.

" greateſt Moment, they that receive the whole Will " of God upon Grounds of Certainty, muſt be aſſured " that therein they receive all Matters neceſſary to our " Salvation.

Never was any Purſe ſo rifled as this is by *J. S.* he examines not only the Coin in it, but the very *Strings* and *Linings* of it. He is a dreadful Man at Ranſacking a Metaphor. He tells me, *My Similitude is ſo far from running on four Legs, that it is in many regards lame on the right (and indeed only) foot it ought to ſtand on; and which is worſe, perhaps againſt my ſelf. The ſum of it amounts to this, that becauſe Scripture contains all, and Proteſtants have Scripture, therefore they have all. A ſtrange kind of Diſcourſe! As if, becauſe they have it in a Book, therefore they have it in their Minds and Souls, in which, and no where elſe Faith is to reſide.* Third Letter, p. 40.

But was not the Queſtion put, whether we had *All the Points of Faith which our Saviour taught?* And how could I anſwer a Queſtion about *All*, but by ſhewing where we had *All?* If All the Doctrine of Chriſt be there, we muſt be certain we have all, if we have the Scripture which contains all. *But it is not enough to have it in a Book.* I grant it. But ſtill if you ask, *where all my Faith is contained*; I muſt refer you to that Book which contains All. For I profeſs to believe every thing there, and nothing as a Point of Faith, but what is there. We do not pretend, that it is enough for Perſons to ſay, their Faith is in ſuch a Book; but we grant that they ought to read and ſearch, and actually believe what ever they find in that Book; but ſtill all Points are not equally neceſſary to all Perſons that are therein contained, but all ſuch as are neceſſary to Salvation lie there open

open to the Capacities of all who desire to know them.

Now this is one of the things *J. S.* finds fault with this similitude of a Purse for, *viz. That People think it is an easie thing to open, and as easie to come at the Sense of Scripture, as to take Money out of a Purse: 'Tis but plucking the Strings, and the Deed is done.* And is this any Disparagement to a Rule of Faith to be plain and easie? If it were not so, it could not be a Rule of Faith for all Persons. We do not say, that any Person by opening the Scriptures, may presently attain to the Certain Sense of all Places of Scripture; but that which I assert, is, That no Man who sets himself to read and consider the Scriptures as he ought, and prays for Wisdom from God, shall miss of knowing all things necessary to his Salvation. But Mr. *S.* is for mending the Similitude, and truly he doth it after an extraordinary manner. *He will allow the Scripture to be a Purse, provided the Purse's Mouth were tied up with a Knot of such a mysterious contrivance, that none could open it but those who knew the Mind of the Bequeather; and that the Church, to which it was left as a Legacy, had knowledge of his Mind, and so could open it, whilst Others only perplexed themselves more while they went about it.*

The Point then between Us, is, whether the Scripture were left only to the Church to Interpret it to the People in all Points; or whether it were intended for the general good of the whole Church, so as thereby to direct themselves in their Way to Heaven; and consequently, whether it may not be opened and understood by all Persons in Matters that are necessary to their Salvation.

One would think by the Church of *Romes* management of the Scripture, keeping it so much out of the Peoples

Peoples hands, and talking ſo much of the Danger and Miſchief that comes by it, that they did eſteem it juſt as the Old *Romans* did the *Sybillin* Oracles, which were to be kept up from the view of the People, and only to be conſulted in Caſes of great Difficulty, and no farther Queſtions were to be asked, but what the Keepers of them declared to be their meaning, was to be ſo received without any farther Examination. And this is the Senſe of the Politicians of that Church, concerning the Scripture.

But when they have written like *Divines*, and have been driven to ſtate the Controverſie truly, they have been forced to ſuch Conceſſions, as have overthrown the *Political Hypotheſis*. For,

I. They cannot deny, that the Scripture was deſigned to be a Certain and Infallible Rule of Faith to all. This *Bellarmin* proves in the beginning of his Controverſies; where he ſhews at large, That the Law was the Rule in the *Old Teſtament*. *To the Law, and to the Teſtimony. Bleſſed are they that ſearch thy Commandments*, &c. That in the *New Teſtament* Chriſt proves his Doctrine by the Scriptures, and refers the Phariſees to the Scriptures, and confuted the Sadduces out of them. That the Apoſtles direct Chriſtians to honour, and eſteem, and to rely upon them. And then he proves, that a Rule of Faith muſt be Certain and Known; and for the Scriptures, he ſaith, *Nihil eſt Notius, nihil Certius*. Nothing is more Known, nothing more Certain. How can this be, if there be ſuch *Myſtical Knots which tye it together, that none but the Church-Guides can unlooſe?* How can this then ever be ſo Known, as to be a Rule of Faith to the People? And not meerly *a Rule, but a moſt Certain and Safe Rule.*

Bell. de Verbo Dei l. 1. 2.

Which

Which is the greateſt Non-ſenſe in the World, if it cannot be underſtood by thoſe, who are to make it their Rule. They may as well ſay, That *Algebra* was a Rule for Maſons and Carpenters, and a *Jacob*'s Staff for a Taylor's Meaſure.

But Mr. *S.* hath beaten his Brains ſo long about *Rules* and *Rulers*, and that which is *ruled* and *regulated* by them, that we muſt not expect that he ſhould be tied down to Cardinal *Bellarmin*'s Notions; and therefore I muſt conſider what he ſaith, after above Twenty years hard labour about theſe things.

He tells me plainly, I quite miſtake the meaning of the word Rule. For (ſaith he) *it ſpeaks Rectitude.* No doubt a Right Rule doth. *But ſtill I miſtake his meaning.* How ſo? There muſt be a *Rectitude* in the Rule. *That is not it.* What then? *It muſt be evident Rectitude, i. e.* Evident to be Right. *Not ſo.* I hope we ſhall come at it at laſt. *It is ſuch an Evident Rectitude as preſerves thoſe who regulate themſelves by it from Obliquity or Deviation, that is, in our Caſe, from Errour.* And is this the wonderful Myſtery? There wants but one Word to make it paſt diſpute, *viz.* who *effectually regulate themſelves by it.* For *Regulating* is an ambiguous Word, and may be taken, either 1. For what a Man takes and profeſſes to be his *Rule* which he is to act by; ſo a *Ciceronian regulates* himſelf by *Cicero*, *i. e.* he declares his *Manner of Speech* to be the *Rule* he orders his Speech by. And yet it is very poſſible that ſuch a Man may uſe Phraſes which are not *Cicero*'s, for want of ſufficient Skill and Care. 2. For what he doth in Conformity to his Rule. And ſo he doth *Regulate* himſelf by *Cicero*, who doth not in the leaſt ſwerve from his Manner of Speaking. But *Cicero* is the Rule to both theſe. And ſo the Queſtion here comes to this, Whether

Third Letter, p. 81.

ther that can be ſaid to be a true Intellectual Rule, which Men through their own default, and not through any defect in the Rule, may deviate from? If a Rule be in it ſelf Certain, and be certainly received for a Rule, that is ſurely enough to make it a Rule to a Man; but it is not neceſſary to the being of a Rule, that a Man can never deviate from it by his own Fault. For, there is no Intellectual Rule can be aſſigned, but it is poſſible for a free Agent to deviate from; although he do at the ſame time profeſs it to be his Rule. Do not all Chriſtians agree the Commands of Chriſt to be an Infallible Rule of Life? And *J. S.* by his admirable Logick will either prove this not to be a Rule, or that it is impoſſible for Men to Sin. For, ſaith he, *A Rule ſpeaks Rectitude, and that ſuch an evident one as preſerves thoſe who regulate themſelves by it from Obliquity or Deviation.* Yes, ſaith he, this is very plain, thoſe who Regulate themſelves by Chriſt's Rule, cannot Sin; I grant it, thoſe who do effectually Regulate themſelves by it; but Others may profeſs this to be their Rule, and the moſt Infallible Rule of Life, and yet through their own Fault may deviate from it. So here Perſons may own the Scripture to be a moſt Certain & Infallible Rule as to Truth and Falſhood; and they are ſure while they effectually *regulate* themſelves by it, they can never Err; but while they profeſs to do it, they may. So that all Mr. *S*'s Subtilty vaniſhes into nothing, by ſo plain and eaſie a Diſtinction. Therefore I am ſtill of the mind, that a Rule of Faith is that whereby we are to judge what we are bound to believe as to Divine Revelations. No, ſaith *J. S.* I ought to have ſaid, *It is that by which, while we follow it, we ſhall be abſolutely ſecured from erring in Faith.* This follows from the *Rectitude* of the Rule, that while Men keep to it, they cannot Err;

but

but it doth not follow from the Nature of the Rule, that Men muſt neceſſarily follow it. For is it poſſible for Men to miſunderſtand a Certain Rule or not? *i.e.* ſuch a Rule which if they truly follow, they ſhall be ſecured from Erring: If not, then the Rule muſt be plain and evident to all Capacities, to ſuch a degree, that they cannot fail in judging by it. If it be poſſible, then, although the Rule be in it ſelf Certain and Infallible, yet it is poſſible for Men to Err through ſuch a Miſtake, and while they think they follow the Rule, they may run into Errour. And it is ſtrange to me, that Mr. *S.* in all this time hath not diſcerned the Fallacy that hath miſled him. If it hath really miſled him, and not been ſet up by him, on purpoſe to Confound and Confute Hereticks, as he tells the Cardinals at *Rome*. But one of that Number hath fully proved, as I have ſhewed already, that the Scripture was intended for a Rule of Faith to the People; and then it follows from *J. S.* himſelf, that while they Regulate themſelves by it, they can never Err. What Reaſon then can be given, why ſuch a Rule of Faith ſhould be kept from them? And the Purſe be tied up with ſo many Myſterious Knots, which are utterly inconſiſtent with the Notion of a Rule of Faith.

II. They grant, that there is a great difference in the Points contained in Scripture; of which ſome are allowed to be *ſimply neceſſary to Salvation*; as thoſe which are required to Baptiſm; and *Bellarmin* yields, *That all theſe Points are certainly contained in Scripture; and were the things which the Apoſtles conſtantly preached to all People.* Who cannot be denied to have been capable of Underſtanding theſe things, when they heard them preached; and how could they loſe the

Bellar. de Verbo Dei, l. 4. c. 11.

Capacity of Understanding them when they were written? And if they might still Understand them, then the Scripture hath no such *Mysterious Knots*, but all Points necessary to Salvation may be understood by the People. So that as to these Points of greatest Importance, the Scripture must be left as a Legacy to all Christians, and not only to the Guides of the Church.

Third Letter, p. 44. But *J. S.* craves leave to Explain himself; and it is great pity to deny it him. *Mistake me not*, saith he, *I do not mean Scriptures Letter is not clear in such Passages as concern Morality, or the X Commandments; nor in Matters of Fact, as the Marks or Signs of the Messias foretold by the Prophets*; (Methinks the *Mysterious Knots* should have been about *Prophecies*,) *nor in Parables explained by himself and such like; but in Dogmatical Points or Tenets, which are Spiritual, and oftentimes profound Mysteries, as a Trinity, Christ's Godhead, the Real Presence of his Body in the Sacrament, and such like; and in such as these our Rule is not intelligible enough to keep the Followers of it from Erring.* I Answer, Either the Apostles Preached these Points to all Persons as *necessary to their Salvation*, or they did not. If not, how come they to be *necessary* to be believed now? If they did, then the People were capable of Understanding them when they heard them, and therefore may as well understand them when they read them. I do not mean the *Manner* as to the *Trinity* and *Incarnation* (as to *Transubstantiation*, I know nothing in Scripture about it either as to *Thing* or *Manner*) but the Revelation of such a Doctrine. So that if these Points be owned to be *necessary to Salvation*, they must be so plain that Men may understand their Duty to believe them. For, that is the Bound I keep my self within, that all things Necessary to Salvation, are so plain, that we may be certain

of

of our Duty to believe them; but if not, we may Err without Prejudice to our Salvation.

Mr *S.* asks *what I mean by all things neceſſary to Salvation.* Nothing but what all others do mean by it. *Did Chriſt* (ſaith he) *teach any unneceſſary Points?* Alas for him! But are all Points taught by Chriſt, or written in Scripture, equally neceſſary to the Salvation of all People? No, he ſaith preſently after, *That he will grant that fewer means than the Knowledge of all Chriſt taught, may ſuffice for the Salvation of ſome particular Perſons.* Very well; now I hope he will make ſomething of the main buſineſs in hand, *viz.* To prove that Abſolute Certainty of all that Chriſt Taught, is Neceſſary to Mens Salvation, when he grants that ſome may be Saved, without ſo much as *Knowing all that Chriſt Taught.* To what purpoſe was all this Heat about the Certainty of our Faith, as to all that Chriſt Taught, if at laſt ſome may be Saved without ſo much as Knowing it? How doth Mr. *S.* prove, That thoſe *ſome* are only the Ignorant People in the Church of *Rome*; but that all Ours are tied to no leſs than Infallible Certainty of all that Chriſt Taught. He would have done well, to have proved ſuch a Privilege for Ignorance to have been limited to their Communion; and that no Claim can be allowed as to the Circumſtances of any other particular Perſons. *Some few* (he ſaith again) *may be Saved without the Knowledge of ſuch and ſuch Points, ſlender Motives being enough for their Circumſtances.* I thank Mr. *S.* for this. It ſeems the Point as to *Salvation* is gained, unleſs particular Perſons among us can be proved to be none of theſe few. But whereever they are, it ſeems *they may be Saved*; but I hope, not without True and Saving Faith; whence it follows, that ſuch Faith hath no neceſſary Relation to theſe

Pag. 48.

Pag. 48.

high Points; and there is no need of Infallible Certainty, as to them, of all Christ Taught. One of these high Points, is that of *Transubstantiation*; too high for me and Thousands and Millions besides, ever to apprehend, let us do our utmost; nay we cannot apprehend (such is our dulness) that we can have any Certainty, as to Sense or Reason, if we hold it. We hope therefore *J. S.* will enlarge his Number, and not talk only of *some Few that may be Saved* without the Knowledge of such deep Mysteries; we desire to be admitted into his Number, for truly our Capacities can never be stretched so far, as to comprehend the Possibility of Transubstantiation. Suppose *our Motives be slender*, yet they are such as move us to that degree, that we cannot overcome the Reluctancies of Sense, and Reason, and Revelation, and Tradition against it.

Ibid. But Mr. *S.* brings himself off with a *Salvo*; *Though all Points are not necessary for every particular Person, yet all of them are necessary for the Body of the Church, whose Pastors are to Instruct their Children in them, and apply the Efficacy of them to their Souls, as their Capacities admit, and Exigencies require.* It seems still they are not Necessary to particular Persons, but according to their Capacities and Exigencies, but *they are to the Body of the Church.* But how came they to be Necessary to the Body of the Church? For Instance, The Point of Transubstantiation is a very deep Point; and although particular Persons may be Saved without believing it, yet I cannot understand how this deep Point comes to be Necessary, in any Respect, for the Body of the Church. I hope *J. S.* will not deny this to be one of his Necessary Church-Points: Let him then shew, how it comes to be so *Necessary for the Pastors of the Church to Instruct their Children in it.* My *Capacity*, I assure him, will

will not reach to this, and therefore I hope I may be excuſed; and in his own words, my mind is not capable of *being cultivated by ſuch elevating Conſiderations.* Page 49. I do not believe there is any ſuch danger of *the Flocks dying, or falling ſhort of their full growth they might have had in the Plentiful Paſturage of the Church*, as *J. S.* elegantly ſpeaks, if they do not believe *Tranſubſtantiation*, or any ſuch *deep Points.*

But ſtill *we have no Abſolute Certainty of our higheſt Fundamentals.* No? We affirm the Contrary; and from Abſolutely Certain Grounds. It is *Abſolutely Certain*, that whatever God Reveals is true, and ought to be believed by us. And we are, as abſolutely Certain as Scripture and Reaſon can make us, that God hath Revealed the Fundamentals of our Faith. *But there is Experience to the Contrary.* What Experience? That we are not Certain? We affirm that we are; and who can tell beſt? How comes Mr. *S.* to know we are not Certain when we ſay we are? *But all are not, as Socinians*, &c. What are they to us? Are not we certain, becauſe ſome are not *Certain?* What pittiful Reaſoning is this? Is Mr. *S.* Certain of his *Infallible Ground* of Certainty, *Oral Tradition? Why do I ask ſuch a Queſtion?* For very good Reaſon; becauſe there are ſome not Certain of it, and even in his own Church; but cry out upon it, as Fallible, Fallacious, Dangerous, and Deſtructive of Faith, and leading to Atheiſm. From whence it follows, on Mr. *S*'s. Principles, that he cannot be Certain himſelf, becauſe others are not. Nay, it is impoſſible he ſhould have any Certainty on his own Grounds. For he can have no Rule of Certainty, as I ſhall evidently prove from his own Words. A Rule muſt have *Abſolute Certainty*; Abſolute Certainty there cannot be where Perſons are left uncertain;

but

but there are many in the Church of *Rome*, that not only doubt of his Rule of Infallible Certainty, but utterly deny it, and diſpute againſt it. How is it then poſſible, for him to be certain of it on his own Grounds?

But it is time to proceed to another Objection againſt our Rule of Faith.

Third Letter. Page, 50. VIII. *J. S.* ſaith, *We can be no more certain of our Rule, than we are of the Truth of the Letter of Scripture; but we cannot be certain we have the Right Letter, unleſs we have a Right Tranſlation, and that muſt be from a true Copy; no Copy can be true, unleſs Conformable to the Original; and if there be any failure in any of theſe, nay, if we have not abſolute Certainty of all theſe, we cannot have any abſolute Certainty of our Faith.*

This *Objection*, thoſe of the Church of *Rome*, who believe Scripture to be a Rule of Faith, (though not the Complete) are concerned to Anſwer, as well as we. For, the Matters of Faith contained in Scripture are convey'd to their Minds after the ſame manner. *Page 51.* But Mr. *S.* ſaith *Their Caſe is different from ours.* Do not they make the *Vulgar Tranſlation Authentick?* And will not the ſame Objections then lie againſt all thoſe who rely upon it? Let us ſee how *J. S.* clears this Matter: 1. *The Canon of the Books comes down*, ſaith he, *by the Teſtimony of all Chriſtian Churches, that are truly Chriſtian.* And we ſay, the Canon of the Books comes down by the Concurrent Teſtimony of all Chriſtian Churches, however differing in other things. And herein, I think, we have much the advantage. For, we do not except againſt the Teſtimony of any Chriſtian Churches; nor condemn them as not truly Chriſtian till their Cauſe be better heard and examin'd. 2. *The Doctrine of Chriſt*, ſaith he, *tranſfuſed into the hearts*

hearts of the faithful, both taught them how, and obliged them to correct the Copy in those particular Texts that concerned Faith. What is this, but in plain terms to expose the Scriptures to the Scorn and Contempt of Atheists and Infidels? Who would desire no better a Concession than this, that the Scripture hath been corrected in Matters of Faith, according to the Faith of the Church. If this be granted, it is impossible to prove that we have any true Original Texts, *in Matters of Faith:* For if the Church did correct the Copy in those particular Texts, which concerned Faith, according to the Sense of the faithful; then the Church in every Age might so correct it: and consequently we can never be sure, that the Texts continue the same for any two Ages together; unless it be first proved impossible for the Sense of the Church to vary in any two Ages; or of those who think themselves bound to correct the Texts. And I should be very sorry to have my Faith rest upon such a slippery Foundation. I will put the Case, as to the *Arian Controversie.* How was it possible for the *Nicene* Fathers to have convinced the *Arians* on such a Supposition as this? "You alledge "several Texts of Scripture, might they say, to prove "the Godhead of Christ, and his Equality with the "Father; but how can we know that these were Ori- "ginal Texts, and not corrected by the Guides of the "Church then, according to their own Sense? We "do not deny that there were some leading Men of this "Opinion, and having gained a Party to themselves, "they corrected the *Texts* according to it: And there- "fore we can never be satisfied, that these were the "Original Texts, because we can bring down a Tradi- "tion of a contrary Sense from the Apostles times. I do not see what satisfaction they could ever receive, Page 51.

if

if this pernicious Principle be allowed, that the Texts were to be corrected in Matters that concern Faith, according to the Senſe of the Church. But he ſaith it is, *If any Errour, through the careleſneſs, unattentiveneſs, or malice of the Tranſlators, or Tranſcribers at any time had crept in.* This doth not one jot mend the Matter. For if the Faith of the preſent Church be the Rule, then the Texts are to be corrected according to it, and the blame to be laid on the Careleſneſs or Malice of Tranſlators and Tranſcribers. This is a miſerable Account of the *Certainty of Texts of Scripture in Points of Faith*; As to *other Texts of inferiour concern*, as he ſpeaks, *they could be beſt corrected, by multitudes of other ancient Copies, the Churches Care ſtill going along, as was ſhewn in the higheſt manner, by the Council of* Trent, *that ſo it might be as exact as Human Diligence could well render it.* As to multitudes of Copies they ſerve us as well as them; but as to the Care of the Council of *Trent*, I am by no means ſatisfied. For 1. They went no farther than a Tranſlation, and declared that Authentick, without due regard to the Original Text. 2. The Care taken was not ſo exact; for then *Clemens* the Eighth did great Injury to *Sixtus* the Fifth, when he recalled and corrected his Bibles in ſo many Places after *Sixtus* the Fifth, had publiſhed his for an Exact Edition. 3. There are ſtill complaints in the Church of *Rome* of want of Exactneſs in the Vulgar Latin. 4. After all this is but *Human Diligence*, and no ſuch *Abſolute Certainty*, as *J. S.* requires from us.

But it may be, he will ſay, *That he doth not at all make it his Rule of Faith*; Let him declare ſo much; and then we know what to Anſwer. *This is ſtill putting off.* Therefore I will give a diſtinct Anſwer.

I. We

I. We do utterly deny that it is in any Churches Power *to correct Original Texts, becauſe they contradict the Senſe of the preſent Church*; or any Tranſlations any farther, than they differ from the Originals. And I do not know any aſſertion that ſhakes more our Faith, as to the Scripture, than this of *J. S.* doth.

II. The early Appeals made to *Scripture* in Matters of Faith, by the Writers of the Chriſtian Church, make us Certain that there could be no ſuch *Alterations* or *Corrections* of the Texts, according to the ſenſe of the Correctors. As for Inſtance, we find the Places produced againſt the *Arians* uſed before againſt the *Samoſatenians* and *Artemonites*.

If it be ſaid, *They might correct the Fathers to* I anſwer, That there is no imaginable Ground for any ſuch ſuſpicion; becauſe the Fathers lived in diſtant Places and Countries, and therefore when their Teſtimonies agree about ſome places of Scripture alledged by them, there can be no Reaſon to ſuſpect any Corruption or Alteration of the Text. As for Inſtance, no one Text of the whole New Teſtament, hath been more ſuſpected than that of 1 S. *John* 5. 7. *There are three that bear Record in Heaven*, &c. And it cannot be denied, that there hath been great variety, both in the Greek and Latin Manuſcripts about it; yea, there was ſo in S. *Jeroms* time, as appears by his Preface to the Canonical Epiſtles; who charges the leaving it out to the unfaithfulneſs of the Tranſlators. S. *Jerom* is cried out upon as a Party in this Controverſie, and therefore it is ſaid on the other ſide, that he put it in as favouring his own Opinion. But his Integrity is vindicated herein, becauſe S. *Cyprian* ſo long before the *Arian Controverſie* produced this Place. So that our

S. Cyprian. de Unit. Ep iſt. ad Jubai.

Certainty as to Scripture doth not depend upon the meer Letter, but upon comparing the beſt and moſt antient Copies, with the Writings of the Fathers, who ſtill made uſe of the Scriptures in all Diſcourſes and Debates about Matters of Faith.

III. The *variety* of *Readings* in Matters that are not of Faith, cannot hinder our Certainty in Matters of Faith. We do not pretend, that there is no kind of variety in the Copies of the New Teſtament; but I am of Opinion that this rather eſtabliſhes than weakens our Faith. For, conſidering the great Multitudes of them, and how inſignificant they are, it ſhews that this Book was liable to the common Accidents of Books; but yet, that there is no ſuch variety, as to make one ſuſpect any Fraud or Deſign in the Alterations that appear in the Manuſcript Copies. And as to Tranſlations that have been made among us, the People who are not able to examin them by the Originals, have no Reaſon to ſuſpect them, as to any Matter of Faith. Not meerly from the Skill and Integrity of the Perſons, and the Care that hath been taken, but becauſe it was ſo much the Concernment of ſome Men to have leſſen'd the Credit of our Tranſlations, as much as was poſſible, and they have not been able to produce any thing that might ſhake the Faith of a conſidering Man.

If it be ſaid after all, This is but *Human Faith*, and not *Divine*; I anſwer,

IV. We muſt be careful to diſtinguiſh the Certainty of *Human* and *Divine Faith* in this Matter. We do not pretend that we have an Abſolute Divine Certainty of things that are only capable of Human Certainty; and we do not ſay, that we have only Human Certainty of things capable of *Divine Certainty*. If the

Queſtion

Queſtion be put concerning the *Objects* of *Divine Faith*, then we do anſwer, That we have a *Divine Certainty* of them from thoſe things, which are the proper Evidence of Divine Revelation. We believe the Doctrine of Chriſt with a Divine Faith, becauſe it was confirmed by Miracles and Prophecies: We believe the New Teſtament to be written by the Holy Spirit, becauſe the Promiſe of the Spirit was fulfilled upon them; and eſpecially in a thing of ſo great Concernment to the whole Chriſtian Church. But if the Queſtion be asked only concerning a Matter of Fact, as whether the Books that bear ſuch Names were written by the Perſons, whoſe Names they bear; then I can have no greater Certainty than belongs to a Matter of Fact; but then it is ſo circumſtantiated, that I have a greater and more abſolute Certainty, as to this, then any other Matter of Fact which wants the Proofs that this hath. And if as to Books, and Copies, and Tranſlations, we have as high a Certainty, as the thing is capable of, it is madneſs to expect and require more. For where there is but a Human Teſtimony, there cannot be the Certainty of Divine Faith, which muſt not only have a Divine Object, but muſt reſt on a Divine Teſtimony; but where the Teſtimony is *Human*, the Certainty muſt be ſuch as relates to the higheſt of that kind. But ſtill, ſuch a Faith may have Abſolute Certainty of its kind; and although in regard of its Teſtimony it be Human Faith, yet in regard both of its *Object*, its *inward Cauſe*, and its *Effects*, it may be truly called *Divine*.

IX. The laſt *Objection* is, concerning *the Number of Canonical Books*. *Pray ſatisfie us* (ſaith Mr. *S.*) *about this exact Number of Books; and how many will juſt ſerve* Third Letter, p. 58.

turn. One would think by his Objections, *J. S.* were preparing Matter for the *Critical History* of the *New Teſtament*; he ſeems ſo concerned to leſſen the Authority of it. But I ſhall Anſwer the Objections he offers.

Page 56. 1. *There may have been Books loſt that were written by Perſons divinely inſpir'd, and we have no unanimous Conſent of the Chriſtian Church that there is none loſt; and thoſe Books might contain Matters different from, or to be ſuperadded to the Canon we have now; and without this, we can have no Certainty, that the Books we have now, contained all the Divine Revelations.* I Anſwer,

I. If we have the unanimous Conſent of the Chriſtian Church, that we have the Canon of the *New Teſtament* entire, then we have their Conſent, that there is no Book, written by Divine Inſpiration, loſt. And this appears by the Conteſt in the IV. Century, about the juſt Number of the Canonical Books; The Churches then differ'd about ſome Books not then Univerſally receiv'd; as the *Apocalypſe* in ſome, and the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* in others. Which ſhews, that the Churches were then ſo ſolicitous to preſerve any Books that appear'd to be written by Perſons Inſpir'd, that although theſe did then want Univerſal Conſent, yet they were ſtill kept, and read, and diſpers'd, till upon further Examination they came to be Univerſally read. It is not therefore in the leaſt probable they ſhould ſuffer any Apoſtolical Writings to be loſt.

II. This is to charge the Chriſtian Church with ſo groſs a Neglect, as overthrows the force of all his Arguments for Tradition. For we muſt ſuppoſe an Apoſtolical Writing ſent to ſome Church by Direction of the Holy Spirit, and yet that Church be ſo notoriouſly

riouſly careleſs, as to loſe a Book containing in it many Points of Faith; now I appeal to any one of common Senſe, whether he could truſt their Word for Matters of Faith, who could be ſo negligent as to loſe a great many Points of Faith at once. And the more ſuch a Book were diſperſed, the Argument is ſtill ſtronger againſt *Tradition*. Beſides, this ſhews the great Inſufficiency of Oral Tradition, if theſe Points of Faith are loſt; becauſe ſuch a Book was loſt, wherein they were contained. If Tradition had been ſo effectual a Means of Conveying Matters of Faith, it ſhould have appear'd in ſuch a Caſe, *viz.* in preſerving ſuch Matters of Faith, though the Books were loſt: But we find nothing like this, ſo much as pretended. Although it were much eaſier pretended than proved.

III. This is to ſuppoſe the Providence of God not to be immediately concerned in preſerving Books written by Divine Inſpiration. Mr. *S.* doth really ſuppoſe that Books written by Divine Inſpiration may have been loſt, or at leaſt that we cannot prove that they are not: But we think it a conſiderable Proof, that they could not, becauſe the Divine Providence doth ſo immediately concern it ſelf in preſerving that which tends ſo much to the Good of his Church. *If a Hair doth not fall from our Heads, nor a Sparrow fall on the Ground*, without the Providence of God (as our Saviour affirms) is it not very unreaſonable to ſuppoſe that a Divine Book, written for the Benefit of the Chriſtian Church, ſhould be wholly loſt? Eſpecially conſidering the extraordinary Care the firſt Chriſtians took, in Times of the greateſt Perſecutions, to preſerve the Scriptures; and no force or violence could extort them out of their hands. On Mr. *S*'s Suppoſition, it was no hard Matter. Mat. 10. 29. 30.

ter for a Book of Scripture to be loſt, *viz.* if the ſeveral Books had been committed to the Cuſtody of ſome Men in Truſt for the whole Church; but if we conſider the things as they really were, it will appear hardly poſſible. For the Books were not kept up at firſt in a few hands, but diſperſed abroad in multitudes of Copies, and received with mighty Veneration both on the Account of the Authors of them, and the Matters contained in them. They were read both in Publick and in Private, they heard them in their Aſſemblies, and they made them their conſtant Imployment at home; they were their Rule of Life, as well as of Faith. And how is it poſſible to ſuppoſe any Book ſo received, ſo eſteemed, ſo diſperſed, ſo conſtantly read, could be ſuffer'd to be loſt among Chriſtians?

If it be Objected, *That they were not all ſo eſteemed at firſt, as appears by the Epiſtle to the Hebrews, and therefore might more eaſily be loſt*; I Anſwer, That however they were not univerſally received at firſt, yet they were by thoſe Churches to whom they were written; and among them they were not kept up, but mightily diſperſed; ſo that there was no way to loſe them, from the firſt ſpreading of them abroad; unleſs we can ſuppoſe ſuch multitudes of Chriſtians to conſpire together to ſuppreſs a Book of ſo great Concernment to themſelves. As if Perſons who claim an Eſtate by virtue of ſome Deeds, ſhould all agree to imbezel them, or any material part of them. Here was no pretence for Regiſters and Abridgments, which ſome make uſe of to leſſen the Authority of the Books of the *Old Teſtament*; for here we have the very Authentick Writings of the Apoſtles, and their own Epiſtles in their own ſtyle and Expreſſions. And ſuppoſing the Churches, to whom they were ſent, to have received them as their Writings,

and

and to have communicated them to others, as they did, I do not ſee, under theſe Circumſtances, how a Book, containing Divine Revelations, could be loſt.

II. He Objects, *That the Canon of Scripture was not entire, but deficient for ſome hundreds of years, till the whole Canon was collected and acknowledged, and therefore ſo long the Church had no Perfect Rule of Faith.* Page 58.

I Anſwer,

I. I diſtinguiſh between a Compleat Rule of Faith, and a Compleat Canon of Scripture. For, if the Books owned and univerſally received, contain in them all Matters of Faith, then the Rule of Faith is Compleat, although ſome particular Books may be ſtill in Diſpute. As for Inſtance, it is certain, that in St. *Jerom*'s Time, the Church of *Rome* did not receive as Canonical the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*; Had not that Church therefore a Compleat Rule of Faith? If God hath ſo abundantly provided for his Church, that there may be a full Revelation of all Points of Faith in the reſt, then the diſputing the Authority of ſuch an Epiſtle, doth not derogate from the Compleatneſs of the Rule of Faith. For, if they have all Points of Faith, they muſt have a Compleat *Rule of Faith.*

II. It is no Prejudice to the true Canon of Scripture, that ſome particular Books of the *New Teſtament* were for ſome time diſputed by ſome particular Churches. For, if it were done without Ground, it doth reflect more on thoſe Churches than on thoſe Books; eſpecially when thoſe very Churches afterwards received them. And this was the Caſe of the Church of *Rome*, as to the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews*: St. *Jerom* affirms, *That not only*

Hieronym. ad Dardanum.

only the Greek Churches all received it, but that all the Ancient Writers did ſo; and not meerly as an Eccleſiaſtical, but as a Canonical Epiſtle: Therefore this muſt be a late thing in the Church of *Rome*; and in probability, began upon the *Novatian* Controverſie, which Epiſtle was thought too much to favour the *Novatian* Doctrine; and when that *Controverſie* did abate, that *Epiſtle* recovered its *Authority* in the Church of *Rome*. But Mr. *S.* is angry with me, *for reflecting on the Church of* Rome *for not receiving the Epiſtle to the Hebrews in St.* Jerom's *Time*; *which* (he thinks) *was an Act of Prudence, antecedent to the Judgment or Determination of any Church, whether Greek or Latin.* One may ſee by this how well verſed he is in the Canon of Scripture, when St. *Jerom* declares, that not only all the Greek Writers received it, but all the Ancient, and that as *Canonical.* Was here no antecedent Judgment of the Church in this Matter? Doth not the Conſent of all Ancient Writers, even in St. *Jerom*'s Time, make a Judgment of the Church? But he adds, *That what I make a heinous Crime in the Church of* Rome, *was a commendable Caution in it.* That which I ſaid, was, That it hence appear'd, that the Church of *Rome* was far from being believed then to have the Authority of making the Canon of Scripture, or being Infallible in Faith. And what ſaith *J. S.* in Anſwer to this? Not one Syllable, but runs it off to another thing.

Third Letter, p. 57.

But why do I not as well blame the Greek Churches for not receiving the Apocalypſe? They do not pretend to ſuch Authority and Infallibility in this Matter, as the Church of *Rome* doth. I do not deny that there were ſome Greeks then to blame in rejecting the Apocalypſe, but *Bellarmin* ſaith, they were but few and obſcure Perſons; and he produces the Teſtimonies of

Juſtin

Juſtin Martyr, *Irenæus*, *Theophilus Antiochenus*, *Melito Sardenſis*, *Dionyſius Alexandrinus*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, *Origen* and *Athanaſius*, all approving it. And the Occaſion of diſputing it aroſe from the Millenary Opinion, which ſome thought they could not confute, as long as the Apocalypſe had ſuch Authority in the Church.

And ſuch Diſputes as theſe, which wore off by degrees, are no real Prejudice to the Canon of the *New Teſtament*, which was at firſt generally received; and although ſome few Books were conteſted for a time, yet they recover'd their Authority, and have ever ſince been received by the Univerſal Conſent of all Chriſtian Churches.

III. He Objects againſt this Univerſal Conſent, the *Teſtimonies of* Marcion, Ebion, Valentinus, Cerinthus, and Epiphanius *his other Hereticks, who rejected the Canon of the New Teſtament.* Could any Man but *J. S.* make ſuch an Objection as this? But he had a mind to bring me in as a Favourer of all Hereticks; and, as ſuch another Man of Integrity hath done, *of all Anti-Catholick and Anti-Chriſtian Doctrines.* But where have I given any Occaſion for ſuch ſpiteful Reflections? All that I ſaid, was, We have the Univerſal Conſent of all Chriſtian Churches for the Canon of the *New Teſtament*, i. e. Of all ſince the time, that the Epiſtle to the *Hebrews* was receiv'd in the Latin, and the *Apocalypſe* in the Greek Churches; notwithſtanding all the Diviſions they have ſince fallen into, yet they had no Difference as to the Canon of the *New Teſtament.* And this I inſiſted on as the Ground of our Certainty, *viz.* The Unanimous Conſent of all the great Bodies of Chriſtians, that have continued under different Denominations to this day. *Third Letter*, p. 59.

Page 74. To this he gives no other Anſwer, *but that my Anſwer to the Fifth Queſtion, is co-incident with that to the Fourth.* I thought *J. S.* in the Self-evident way, would have liked my Anſwer the better for it. But he doth not comprehend the deſign of it. I had ſaid before, That we relied on the Univerſal Teſtimony of the Chriſtian Church; upon that the Queſtion was asked, What I meant by the Chriſtian Church: My Anſwer was, *That it was that which was made up of all Chriſtian Churches*; i. e. ſaith *J. S. That all the Parts make the Whole*; and what Incongruity is there? When Mr. G. ſaid, That the Chriſtian Church may be taken in ſeveral Latitudes, he deſired to know in what Senſe I took it; and could I anſwer him more directly than to tell him, I took it in the largeſt Senſe, as it was made up of all the Parts; and not in ſuch a Senſe as they do, who give the Denomination of the Whole to a Part? Page 75. *But by this I do not ſeclude all Hereticks.* I do not take upon me to judge of all the Bodies of Chriſtians in the World, whether they be juſtly charged with Hereſie or not; but I take them only as Chriſtians, and from their Univerſal Conſent, I prove the Certainty of the Canon of Scripture. *Hereby I profeſs a Brotherhood with Excrementitious Outcaſts.* I know not what *Brotherhood* lies in making uſe of their Teſtimony; but I had rather do it, than with unſufferable Pride and Folly call ſo many Bodies of Chriſtians, for whom Chriſt died, *Excrementitious Outcaſts.* But although he ſeems to own that their Teſtimony doth ſtrengthen the Evidence for the Canon of the *New Teſtament*; yet he Page 76. calls it back again, and for extraordinary Reaſons. 1. *They may have corrupted the Letter of Scripture, although they may allow of the Books.* Let us then take their Teſtimony for the Books, and examine the Letter afterwards.

wards. 2. *This Universal Testimony must reach to each Chapter and Verse; but we must have Assurance not only of each Verse, but of each significant Word in the Verse.* How hardly are some Men satisfied about the Certainty of Scripture! Are there not different Copies in all Parts to examin and compare, if there be cause of Mistrust; and if there be none, What Prejudice is this to our Certainty? At this rate, Men may argue against every thing; and that there can be no Certainty of any Writing, unless the Person stood by and saw the Author write; and even then he might question his Senses too. These Objections do indeed lead to an Incurable Scepticism in the Church of *Rome*. 3. *The Judges suspect the Justness of the Cause, if known Knights of the Post are called in to corroborate the Evidence.* What a desperate Cause is that, which forces Men to fling such Dirt in the Face of so many Christian Churches? And that without the least Evidence or Proof against them. How come all the *Greek*, *Abyssine*, *Coptick*, *Oriental* Christians, to be compared to *Knights of the Post*, because they afford a Concurrent Testimony with us about the Canon of the *New Testament*? They may be the honestest and best Part of Christendom, for any thing *J. S.* knows; and what Justice can there be in such Uncharitable Censures? It is not enough for you to say, They are all accounted Hereticks or Schismaticks by you; for we that know how unjust and unreasonable your Censures are so near home, have no Cause to regard them at such a distance. Page 57. Page 76.

Thus I have Answered all the Objections I have met with in *J. S.* against our Rule of Faith.

I now come to the laſt part of my Task, which is to examin the Arguments produced to prove the *Infallibility* of *Oral* and *Practical Tradition*.

First Letter p. 8. The main Argument is thus ſet down by Mr. *S.* *All Traditionary Chriſtians believe the ſame to day which they did yeſterday, and ſo up to the time of our Bleſſed Saviour; and if they follow this Rule, they can never err in Faith, and therefore are Infallible. And they could not innovate in Faith, unleſs they did forget what they held the day before, or out of malice after it.*

All the Parts of this Argument Mr. *S.* endeavours to ſhew to be *Self-evident*; but in truth it is a *Self-evident Fallacy*; as I ſhall ſhew at large. But before I particularly lay it open, I muſt conſider what he ſaith againſt the Method I uſed in the Conference for anſwering it.

I then thought, and do ſtill, that the cleareſt Anſwer to an Argument, which proves a thing impoſſible was to bring an undeniable Inſtance that ſuch a thing really was, which was proved impoſſible to be. And to this purpoſe I produced *the Inſtance of the Greek Church, which profeſſed to follow Tradition, and yet they could not deny to have erred.*

Page 10. This Mr. *S.* ſaith, *Is giving no Anſwer at all; for this is no Anſwer to his Argument, but producing a new Argument againſt him.* And he magiſterially tells me, *That it is my turn to anſwer; and therefore I am confined to* Concedo, Nego *or* Diſtinguo: *as the Propoſitions are either true, falſe or ambiguous, or I may deny the Inference, if I find more terms in the Concluſion than in the Premiſſes. But theſe are my Bounds which I muſt not exceed.* But with ſubmiſſion to theſe Logicians, I anſwer, That where an Argument is deſigned to prove a thing im-

impoſſible, which is contrary to Senſe and Experience, the producing an evident Inſtance is the plaineſt and ſhorteſt way of Anſwering; as well as in an Induction which is allowed to be diſproved by a plain Inſtance. As in the Caſe of *Zeno*'s Argument againſt Motion; *Diogenes* his Moving was a far more effectual Anſwer, than if he had ſtood a great while with his *Concedo*, *Nego* and *Diſtinguo*. J. S. confeſſes, *That the vanity of* Zeno's *Argument was not ill ridiculed by* Diogenes *his moving before him.* Page 11. And why might not I then expoſe the vanity of this Demonſtration by the Inſtance of the Greek Church; unleſs ſome fault be found in the Inſtance. *He brings the Argument, and I an Inſtance againſt it, what are People the wiſer? and which ſhall they be for; the Argument or the Inſtance?* *Zeno* brought his Argument, and *Diogenes* his Inſtance; were not By-ſtanders the wiſer, when it ſo apparently proved the foppery of the Argument? Doth *J. S.* think the vanity of it was not enough expoſed by that means? But he ſaith, *This is excepting againſt the Concluſion, when there lies none againſt the Premiſſes.* No ſuch Matter; for it ſhews there is a Fallacy in the Premiſſes: *It is however but an Argument*, ad hominem; call it what you will, ſo it doth my buſineſs, to ſhew Page 12. the vanity of the Demonſtration. *This way doth but ſham an Adverſary.* And truly that is a great matter, if they be ſuch as *P. G. They are of no uſe for diſcovery of Truth.* As much as laying open Sophiſtry helps to the diſcovery of Truth; which is not a little when we deal with Sophiſtical Diſputers.

But we come to the *Inſtance*. How doth he after all clear this Inſtance of the Greek Church? Doth he deny that they hold to Tradition? No. Doth he deny that they have erred notwithſtanding? All that he ſaith

Page 13. saith is, That P. G. *was no ways obliged not to deny that the Greek Church had erred in Points of Faith.* No? then he must grant that the Roman Church hath erred, for they contradict each other. Let him take his choice; one doth my business as well as the other, and more effectually destroys the pretence of Infallibility in the Roman Church. *But I say, they did not err.* What is my saying to the business in hand? Besides, there are other Points contradictorily held between the Greek and Roman Churches, besides that of the *Filioq*; and the Argument holds as well in any other, as in that. And therefore he must fix the Errour on one side or other.

After all this flourishing he takes heart, and resolves to grapple with the Instance. *Let us see what your Instance will do.* Page 14. Now I thought we shall have a direct Answer. But I am strangely disappointed. For he runs still back to that, *That I do not believe it erred.* Was the Instance brought against me, or against P. G? *But his Answer doth not make or mar the business.* The business of the Demonstration it doth, and that was my business. Page 15. *But this doth not prove that a Church going upon Tradition errs, unless I will grant that the Greek Church hath erred.* What strange Trifling is this? The Dispute was about P. G's. Argument, and not my Opinion. Is this the Answer to the Instance about the Greek Church which Mr. *M.* promised? If this pass for an Answer, I think *J. S.* may defend *Sure footing.* I mentioned P. G's. Answer, *That the Greek Church followed Tradition till the* Arians *left that Rule, and took up a new one. And why saith* J. S. *hath he not answered well?* Because he did not answer to the purpose, which was not about the *Arians*, but the present Greek Church. *But a Church may follow Tradition at*

one

one time, and leave it at another. Very true; but the Greek Church did not forſake Tradition, and yet erred. And therefore Tradition and Errour were found together, and therein lies the force of this undeniable Inſtance. The reſt is ſuch Trifling, that I am really aſhamed to anſwer it over and over. Still he attempts to give an Anſwer, and ſtill fails; but it is ſomething new, and therefore ſhall be conſidered. *His Anſwer,* Page 16. *ſaith J. S. holds as well as to the preſent as paſt Greek Church.* His anſwer! Where is it? *It was that thoſe who err in Faith muſt leave Tradition.* But the Greeks did not leave Tradition, and yet erred in Faith; ſo that the Inſtance holds good ſtill. *He denies that Errour and Tradition can be found together in the Greek Church, or any other Ancient or Modern, i. e.* the Concluſion muſt be held againſt all the Inſtances in the World. *But I ought to ſay, whether the differences were in matters of Faith.* Yes, in ſuch which the Church of *Rome* accounts matters of Faith. *But how can an erring Church ſtill plead Tradition and adhere to it?* Anſwer the Inſtance; for the Greek Church doth plead Tradition. *But then pleading Tradition is no more but quoting ſome Expreſſions of antient Writers, as the* Arians *did:* Not ſo neither; for the Greek Church relies moſt upon Tradition from Father to Son in Practiſe of any Church in the World. *But if they adhere to Tradition, and that Tradition leads them to Chriſt, who could not err, how can they poſſibly err? For, pray did Chriſt teach any Errour?* No certainly. *When a Father believed what Chriſt taught him, and the Son what the Father believed, did not the Son too believe what Chriſt taught? Run it on to the laſt Son that ſhall be born in the World, muſt not every one believe what Chriſt taught, if every one believed what his Father believed?*

And

And ſo Goodnight to the Greek Church; we are
Page 19. come back to the Argument. *I might as well have Inſtanced in the Latin Church it ſelf.* Truly I think ſo too; and ſo you ſhall find in a ſhort time; and how little Advantage you get by ſuch a Challenge.

Page 20. *But it is impoſſible for a Church to adhere to Tradition, and yet to Err; therefore if the preſent Greek Church have Erred, it has not adhered to Tradition; if it have adhered to Tradition, it hath not Erred.* That is, the Argument muſt be good, let the Inſtance be what it will. But an eaſie Diſtinction will ſhew the Weakneſs of this Argument.

Adhering to Tradition may be taken Two ways.

I. For Adhering to Tradition, as the Rule and Means of Conveyance of Matters of Faith.

II. For actually Adhering to that very Doctrine which Chriſt taught, and hath ever ſince been truly convey'd down by Tradition.

In this latter Senſe we grant it impoſſible for Men to Err, while they actually adhere to that very Doctrine which Chriſt taught, and is ſuppoſed to be deliver'd down by Tradition. But this is not the Matter before us; which lies in theſe Two Points.

I. Whether Tradition be an Infallible Way to convey the Doctrine of Chriſt down to us.

II. Whether it be impoſſible for thoſe who hold to This as Their Rule, to Err or not.

And ſo the Anſwer is plain to the main Argument. If by *Traditionary Chriſtians*, be meant ſuch as adhere to that very Doctrine which Chriſt taught, and was actually

actually conveyed down to them, then ſuch Traditionary Chriſtians, ſo believing, cannot Err.

But if by Traditionary Chriſtians be meant ſuch as take Tradition for an Infallible Rule of conveying all Matters of Faith; then we ſay ſuch Traditionary Chriſtians may and have Erred: And that for Two Reaſons.

I. Becauſe Tradition is no Infallible Rule.

II. Becauſe although it were, yet Men might Err, either by miſtaking it, or departing from it.

But ſaith *J. S. They ceaſe to be Traditionary Chriſtians if they do not believe the ſame to Day which they did Yeſterday, and ſo up to Chriſt.* Page 3.

If by Traditionary Chriſtians be meant, they do not really believe what Chriſt taught, we grant it, that they are.

If by *Traditionary Chriſtians* be meant ſuch as bear the Name of Traditionary Chriſtians, and look on Tradition as their Rule, and imagine they have the ſame Faith which Chriſt taught; then they are ſtill Traditionary Chriſtians.

And now I am to give a clear and diſtinct Anſwer to the *Demonſtration* of the *Infallibility* of *Oral Tradition*, as it is managed by *J. S.* and taken into Propoſitions.

I. *All Traditionary Chriſtians believe the ſame to day which they did yeſterday, and ſo up to the time of our Bleſſed Saviour.* J. S. *hopes I have nothing to ſay to this*; but he is miſtaken. For I have many things to ſay to lay open the Notorious Fallacy of it in every Clauſe.

I. *All Traditionary Chriſtians.* Who are they? Are all *Chriſtians Traditionary Chriſtians?* This were to the purpoſe, if it could be proved. But how doth

this appear? Why is it not ſaid, *All Chriſtians have gone upon this Principle?* He knew this could never have been proved. And therefore he puts in the thing in diſpute, and would have it taken for granted, that there were no other but *Traditionary Chriſtians.* Which I deny, and I am certain he can never prove it. Suppoſe then that there were *Chriſtians* not *Traditionary* as well as *Traditionary*, the Propoſition appears ridiculous; ſo far is it from Demonſtration. *Traditionary Chriſtians* believed ſo; *Non-Traditionary Chriſtians* believed otherwiſe; and which are to be believed, is the Queſtion; and that to be determined by the Certainty of the Ground they went upon; and ſo we are come to the Debate between *Scripture* and *Tradition.*

II. *All Traditionary Chriſtians believe the ſame to Day which they did Yeſterday.* This is capable of a threefold meaning.

I. That they do actually believe the ſame to Day which they did Yeſterday. Which is a meer contingent thing, and proves nothing. Or,

II. That they are bound to believe to Day, as they did Yeſterday. And that may be on ſeveral Accounts.

I. Becauſe they ſee Evidence from the Word of God to Day as well as they did Yeſterday.

II. Or becauſe their Guides of the Church teach them the ſame to Day which they did Yeſterday, whom they believe to be Infallible.

III. Or, meerly becauſe they receive it by an *Oral Tradition*, and not on the other Accounts; and then

it

it proves no more than that they are bound to do it; and it is too well known that many fail to do what they are *bound to.*

Or III. That they do Infallibly believe the ſame to Day which they did Yeſterday. But then this ought to have been inſerted in the Propoſition, That Traditionary Chriſtians cannot fail to believe to Day what they did Yeſterday. If it be ſaid, *That this is implyed in their being Traditionary Chriſtians*, then I ſay, the whole is a Fallacy of τὸ ἐν ἀρχῇ, for he ſuppoſes all true Chriſtians to be *Traditionary Chriſtians*, and then that they Infallibly hold to *Tradition* as their *Rule*, and from thence he proves *Tradition* to be *Infallible*. But if the Body of Chriſtians may go upon another Rule, or if going upon Tradition, they may miſunderſtand it, then there is no inſeparable connexion in the ſeveral Links of this Chain.

And there is a further Fallacy in ſuppoſing that if any change in Faith happens, it muſt be as ſudden and remarkable, as if all Men ſhould *to day refuſe to believe what they believed Yeſterday.* Whereas the changes of Opinions are oft-times wrought by inſenſible Degrees, and many concurrent Cauſes; and ſometimes the very ſame Words may be uſed and the Faith altered, as in the Caſe of *Merit*, *Sacraments*, *Sacrifice*, &c. which ſheweth Men may continue the very ſame Terms, and yet believe quite a different thing. And where Changes are gradual, it is very unreaſonable to pitch upon ſuch a preciſe and narrow ſpace of time, as between *to Day* and *Yeſterday*. By the ſame Method, one may demonſtrate it to be impoſſible that any Language ſhould be changed; for People ſpeak the ſame Language *to Day which they did Yeſterday*

and the ſame *Yeſterday which they did the Day before*, and ſo up to the very building of *Babel*; and yet we all know that Languages are continually changed, and to ſuch a degree, that in ſome Ages they cannot underſtand, what was at that time intelligible by all. In ſuch caſes, it is enough to aſſign the general Cauſes and Reaſons of Alterations without fixing a preciſe and determinate Time. And thoſe I ſhall ſpeak to afterwards.

III. *And ſo up to the time of our Bleſſed Saviour.* To prove any thing from hence it muſt be ſhewed,

I. That there can be no Pretence to Tradition taken up without Ground; for if there may, it can by no means follow, That if Men pretend to Tradition, that Tradition muſt run up to the Time of Chriſt.

But then they ceaſe to be Traditionary Chriſtians. What then? Not in pretence, for they may call themſelves ſo ſtill; but in reality they are not.

II. That if Men lay claim to a Rule they muſt always obſerve it. We do not pretend to it as to the Scripture: And what Reaſon is there for it as to Tradition? But if Men may pretend to follow *Tradition*, and do not, then from their being *Traditionary Chriſtians*, it can by no means follow that this Tradition muſt be carried up to the Time of our *Bleſſed Saviour*.

II. The ſecond Propoſition is, *And if they follow this Rule, they can never err in Faith. This is palpably ſelf evident*, ſaith *J. S.* So ſay I too, but it is only to be a meer Fallacy.

To

To follow this Rule is to believe the ſame to Day which they did Teſterday, and ſo up to Chriſt, or downwards: If they did this from Chriſts time, and ſo forwards, they muſt continue to believe the ſame to the End of the World.

If they *really believe* the ſame Doctrine which *Chriſt taught*, no doubt they cannot err. But the Queſtion is, Whether this be an Infallible Rule for us to Judge, they could never miſtake in this Rule, nor follow any other: For if either of theſe could happen, the Demonſtration is loſt. If it were poſſible for Errors to come in ſome other Way, or for Perſons to miſapprehend the Doctrine delivered; then it is not poſſible for us by this Way to be convinced they could not err. The latter I have already ſpoken to; I ſhall now ſhew that there were ſome other ways that Errors might come in. And here I ſhall paſs over the *Common Infirmities* of *Human Nature*, which I think *Oral Tradition* can never Cure, and which leave Men always lyable to Error; but I ſhall name ſome more particular *Ways* of introducing them.

I. By the *Authority* of *Falſe Teachers*. And for this I ſhall not run back to the *Falſe Apoſtles* and *Seducers* in the *Apoſtles* times and afterwards; but I ſhall bring a preſent Inſtance in the *Church* of *Rome*; and that is of *Michael de Molinos*, a Perſon ſolemnly condemned at *Rome*, *Aug.* 28. of this Year for 68 *Propoſitions* taken out of his Books and owned by himſelf, *as the Decree ſaith*; which are there ſaid to be *Heretical*, *Erroneous*, *Blaſphemous*, *Offenſive*, *Raſh*, *Seditious*, *and contrary to Chriſtian Diſcipline*. This Man is ſaid to have had *Thouſands* of Diſciples in *Italy*, in the very Heart of the *Traditionary Church*.

Now,

Now, I desire *J. S.* to inform me, If *Tradition* be *Infallible*, and that be the Way followed in the *Church* of *Rome*, how it was possible for such Multitudes to be deceived in Matters of such Consequence? To say they were not deceived, is to expose the Authority of the Guides of the Church of *Rome* to the greatest Contempt; To say they were deceived, is to own, That notwithstanding *Tradition*, a single Priest may gain such *Authority*, as to deceive *Thousands*; and where lies then the *Infallibility* of *Tradition*?

II. By *Enthusiasm*, or a Pretence to *Immediate Revelation*. For this I shall not produce the Old Instances in *Ecclesiastical History*, as of *Montanus*, *Asclepiades*, *Theodotus*, *Manichæus*, *Arius*, *Ætius*, &c. who all pretended to Revelations for their particular Opinions. But I shall keep to the late Instance of *Molinos*, who asserts, That the Perfection of a Christian State lies in *a Simple, Pure, Infused and Perfect Contemplation, above the Use of Ratiocination or Discursive Prayer, and that in order to this, nothing is so necessary as Self-annihilation.* This Doctrine is now condemned at *Rome*; but how came it into the Church; *Did not they believe the same to Day which they did Yesterday?* If there were *Oral Tradition* for it, how came it to be condemned? If not, then notwithstanding *Oral Tradition*, dangerous Doctrines may get in under a pretence of a more *Sublime* and *Spiritual Way* of *Perfection*, than is to be attained in the Dull and Heavy Way of *Tradition from Father to Son.*

Euseb. l. 5. c. 3. c. 14. c. 28. l. 7. c 31. *Theod.* l. 1. c. 4. l. 2.

III. By a Pretence to a more *Secret Tradition*. And thus *Christianity* was at first corrupted, by such as pretended

pretended that there was a *Myſtical Doctrine* delivered by *Chriſt* of a more purifying Nature, than the Plain and Common Doctrine taught to all People by the *Apoſtles*. So *Hegeſippus* in *Euſebius* affirms, *That the Chriſtian Church was corrupted by this Means*; and to the ſame Purpoſe *Irenæus*. So that *Tradition* was ſo far from ſecuring the *Church* from *Error*, that it was the Means of bringing it in. And the *Publick Tradition* could not hinder this coming in of Error, becauſe the *Secret Tradition* was pretended to be more Divine and Spiritual; the other was only for *Babes*, and this for *grown Chriſtians*.

Euſeb. l. 3. c. 32. l. 4. c. 22.

IV. By *Differences* among *Church-Guides* about the *Senſe* of *Scripture* and *Tradition*. Thus it was in the *Samoſatenian*, *Arian*, *Pelagian*, *Neſtorian*, *and Eutychian Controverſies*. Neither of the Parties diſowned *Scripture* or *Tradition*; and thoſe who were juſtly condemned, pretended ſtill to adhere to both. And if ſuch Flames could not be prevented, ſo much nearer the *Apoſtles Times*, by the help of *Tradition*, What Reaſon can there be to expect it ſo long after?

V. By too great a *Veneration* to ſome particular Teachers, not far from the Apoſtolical Times, in regard to their *Learning* or *Piety*; which made their Diſciples deſpiſe *Tradition* in Compariſon of their *Notions*. And thus *Origens* Opinions came to prevail ſo much in the Church; and the Mixture of *Platoniſm* with *Chriſtianity* proved the occaſion of ſeveral Errors, with Reſpect to the *State of Souls after Death*, as well as in other Points.

VI. The

VI. By *Compliance* with ſome *Gentile Superſtitions* in Hopes to gain more eaſily upon the Minds of the People; who having been long accuſtomed to the *Worſhip* of *Images* and *Tutelar Deities*, it was thought no Imprudent Thing in ſome Guides of the *Church*, when the main Doctrines of *Paganiſm* were renounced, to humour the People in theſe things; ſo they were *Accommodated* to *Chriſtianity*; but others vehemently oppoſed this Method, as repugnant to the True Primitive Chriſtianity. But by Degrees, thoſe *Superſtitions* prevailed; and the *Original Tradition* of the Church thereby corrupted.

VII. By *Implicit Faith*; which puts it into the Power of the *Church-Guides* to introduce what Doctrines they thought fit. When the beſt of the People were told it was againſt the *Fundamental Rights of the Catholick Church* for them to examine any Opinions which were propoſed to them by their Guides, *That they neither did, nor could, nor ought to underſtand them*; and when once this Point was gained, People never troubled themſelves about *Scripture* or *Tradition*; for all they had to do, was only to know what was decreed by the Church, though with a *Non-obſtante* to a Divine Inſtitution; as is plain in the *Council* of *Conſtance*, notwithſtanding all the Tricks to avoid it.

If then, Errours might come into the Church all theſe ways, what a vain thing is it to pretend, That *Oral Tradition* will keep from any poſſibility of Error?

And ſo I need give no other Anſwer to his laſt Propoſition, *That if Men did innovate in Faith, it muſt be either through Forgetfulneſs or Malice*; for

I have ſhewed many *other Cauſes* beſides theſe; eſpecially ſince I intend to ſhew in a particular Diſcourſe how the *Errors* and *Corruptions* we charge on the Church of *Rome* did come into it: My deſign here being only to ſhew the *Poſſibility* of it.

There remain only two things which deſerve any Conſideration: 1. About the Charge of *Pelagianiſm*. 2. About the *Council of Trents* Proceeding on *Tradition*; which will admit of an eaſie Diſpatch.

I. As to the Charge of *Pelagianiſm*. It doth not lie in this, *That he requires any Rational Inducements to Faith*, which we do aſſert as well as he. But it lay in theſe Two things.

I. That a *Divine Faith* was to be reſolved into a *Natural Infallibility*. For we were told that *Divine Faith muſt have Infallible Grounds*; and when we come to examine them, we find nothing but what is *Natural*. And now to avoid the Charge of *Pelagianiſm*, this *Divine Faith* is declared to be *meer Human Faith*; and ſo *Human Faith* is ſaid to have *Infallible Grounds*, but *Divine Faith* muſt ſhift for it ſelf. For, ſaith *J. S.* *'Tis confeſs'd and ever was, that the Human Authority of the Church or Tradition, begets only Human Faith as its Immediate Effect*; *but by bringing up to Chriſt, it leads us to what's Divine.* Well; but what *Infallible Ground* is there for this *Divine Faith*? Where doth that fix? Is it on the *Infallibility* of *Tradition* or not? If not, then we may have *Divine Faith* without it. If it doth, then *Divine Faith* is to be reſolved into Natural Means: And what is this but *Pelagianiſm*? *Third Letter*, p. 24.

Faith Vindicated, p. 155. II. *That he excludes the Pious Disposition of the Will, from piecing out* (as he calls it) *the Defect of the Reasons why we Believe.* And in another place he excludes the Wills Assistance in these words, *That Faith,* Page 157. *or a Firm and Immoveable Assent upon Authority is not throughly Rational, and by consequence partly Faulty, if the Motives be not alone able to convince an Understanding rightly disposed without the Wills Assistance.* How then can a *pious Disposition* of the *Will* be necessary in order to the Act of Faith? And is it not *Pelagianism* to exclude it?

Therefore I was in the right, when I said, That this way of *Oral Tradition* resolves all into a *meer Human Faith*; and that this is the unavoidable Consequence of it. Page 27. *No*, he saith, *he resolves all into Christs and the Apostles teaching.* How ridiculous is this? For, did not *Pelagius* and *Cœlestius* the very same? And the thing I charged upon them, was, That they went no farther upon this Principle than they did. Upon this he asks a very impertinent Question; but if I do not Answer it, I know what Clamours will follow. *Pray do you hold that Christ is a meer Man, or that Believing him is a meer Human Faith, or that the Doctrine taught by Him or Them is meerly Human?* What Occasion have I given for such a Question? But I perceive there is a design among some, to make me be believed to be no Christian. I pray *God* forgive the *Malice* of such Men. I thank God, I have better Grounds for my *Faith* than *Oral Tradition.* I do believe Christ to be more than *meer Man*, even the *Eternal Son of God*, and that his *Doctrine* is *Divine*, and his *Apostles* had *Infallible Assistance* in delivering it.

A CATALOGUE of ſome BOOKS Printed for Henry Mortlock, *at the* Phœnix *in* S. Paul's Church-Yard.

A Rational Account of the Grounds of Proteſtant Religion; being a Vindication of the Lord Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*'s Relation of a Conference, *&c.* from the pretended Anſwer by *T. C.* Wherein the True Grounds of Faith are cleared, and the Falſe diſcovered; the Church of *England* vindicated from the Imputation of Schiſm; and the moſt important particular Controverſie between us and thoſe of the Church of *Rome* throughly examined: By *Edward Stillingfleet*, D. D. and Dean of S. *Pauls*, Folio, the Second Edition.

Origines Britannicæ: Or the Antiquity of the *Britiſh Churches*; with a Preface concerning ſome pretended Antiquities relating to *Britain*, in vindication of the Biſhop of S. *Aſaph*, by *Edward Stillingfleet* D. D. Dean of S. *Pauls*, Folio.

The Rule of Faith: Or an Anſwer to the Treatiſe of Mr. *J. S.* entituled, *Sure footing*, &c. by *John Tillotſon*, D. D. to which is adjoyned, A Reply to Mr. *J. S.*'s third Appendix, *&c.* by *Edward Stillingfleet* D. D.

A Letter to Mr. *G.* giving a true Account of a late Conference at the *D.* of *P*'s.

A ſecond Letter to Mr. *G.* in anſwer to two Letters lately publiſhed concerning the Conference at the D. of *P.*

Veteres Vindicati: In an Expoſtulatory Letter to Mr. *Sclater* of *Putney*, upon his *Conſenſus Veterum*, &c. wherein the abſurdity of his Method, and the weakneſs of his Reaſons are ſhewn; His falſe Aſperſions upon the Church *England* are wiped off, and her Faith concerning the Euchariſt of proved to be that of the Primitive Church: Together with Animadverſions on Dean *Boileaus* French tranſlation of, and Remarks upon *Bertram*.

An Anſwer to the Compiler of *Nubes Teſtium*: Wherein is ſhewn That Antiquity (in relation to the Points in Controverſie ſet down by

by him) did not for the first five hundred Years Believe, Teach and Practice as the Church of *Rome* doth at present Believe, Teach and Practice; together with a Vindication of *Venores Vindicati* from the late weak and disingenuous Attempts of the Author of Transubstantiation Defended, by the Author of the Answer to Mr. *Sclater* of *Putney*.

A Letter to Father *Lewis Sabran* Jesuite, in answer to his Letter to a Peer of the Church of *England*; wherein the Postscript to the Answer to the *Nubes Testium* is Vindicated, and Father *Sabrani* Mistakes further discovered.

A second Letter to Father *Lewis Sabran* Jesuite, in answer to his Reply.

A Vindication of the Principles of the Author of the Answer to the Compiler of *Nubes Testium* in answer to a late pretended Letter from a Dissenter to the Divines of the Church of *England*.

Scripture and Tradition Compared, in a Sermon preached at *Guild-Hall-Chappel*, *Nov.* 27. 1687. by *Edward Stillingfleet* D. D. Dean of S. *Pauls*, the second Edition.

There is now in the Press, and will speedily be published,

An Historical Examination of the Authority of Councils, discovering the false Dealing that hath been used in the publishing of them, and the Difference amongst the Papists themselves about their Number.

it. But what is all this to the preſent Queſtion? I perceive ſome men when they are hard pinched, cry out, that their Adverſaries are *Atheiſts* or *Socinians*, &c. and hope by this means to divert them from the buſineſs before them. But theſe Arts will not do. And ſuch a Duſt cannot ſo blind the Readers Eyes, but he muſt ſee it is raiſed on purpoſe, that he may not be diſcerned in making an Eſcape.

II. As to the *Council* of *Trents* proceeding upon *Tradition*. That which I ſaid, was, The Church of *Rome* hath no where declared in Council, that it hath any ſuch Power of making *Implicit Articles of Faith* contained in *Scripture* to become *Explicit* by its explaining the Senſe of them. And the Reaſon I gave, was, Becauſe the *Church* of *Rome* doth not pretend to make *New Articles of Faith*: But to make Implicit Doctrines to become Explicit, is really ſo to do; as I there proved. Now what ſaith *J. S.* to this?

I. He ſaith, *That the Council of* Trent *defines it belongs to the Church to judge of the True Senſe and Interpretation of Scripture.* As though all that belonged to the *Church*, muſt preſently belong to the *Church* of *Rome*; or all *Judgment* of *Scripture* muſt be *Infallible*; or muſt make things *neceſſary to be believed* which were not ſo before.

II. He ſhews, *That the Church did proceed upon this Power.* What *Power?* Of making things not Neceſſary to become Neceſſary?

I. *It declares* Seſſ. 13. *That from ſome Texts mentioned, the Church was ever perſuaded of the Doctrin of*

Tranſubſtantiation. This is an admirable Argument, to prove, that it can make that Neceſſary to be believed, which was not, becauſe it was always believed.

II. Seſſ. 14. *It declares* 1 Cor. 11. *to be underſtood of Sacramental Confeſſion by the Cuſtom and Practiſe of the Church.* Then I ſuppoſe the Church thought it Neceſſary before.

III. Seſſ. 14. *It declares* Jam. 5. *to be underſtood of Sacramental Confeſſion.* But how? By its Power of making it Neceſſary to be believed meerly by ſuch Declaration? No; but by *Apoſtolical Tradition*; then the meaning is, that it was always ſo underſtood.

But becauſe the *Council* of *Trent* doth pretend to *Apoſtolical Tradition* for the Points there determin'd, and the ſhewing that it had not *Catholick* and *Apoſtolick Tradition*, is the moſt effectual Confutation of the preſent Pretence of *Oral Tradition*, I ſhall reſerve that to another Diſcourſe, part whereof, I hope, will ſuddenly be Publiſhed.

FINIS.